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Representative English
dramas

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Representative English Dramas

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PREFACE

This volume is one of a group intended for a survey course in English literature.

The plays included illustrate six of the more important types of English drama. They also represent all but two of the more important dramatic periods, so that the book, if properly supplemented by collateral reading, is adapted for use (1) in a study of English literature by types or (2) in an outline course in English drama.

However, there are two periods — the later Elizabethan (including Shakespeare) and the more recent contemporary — which cannot be adequately represented in any single collection. Shakespeare stands alone in the diversity of his genius and in the relative importance of his plays. Rather than limit the teacher or the student to any one play, I have preferred to suggest supplementary reading in the principal tragedies, as "Hamlet," "Othello," "King Lear," and "Macbeth"; in the principal comedies, as "The Merchant of Venice," "Much Ado about Nothing," "As You Like It," "Twelfth Night," and "The Tempest"; and in the histories, as "1 Henry IV" and "Henry V."

In recent contemporary drama there is a similar difficulty of selection. Furthermore, because of copyright restrictions the plays of Barrie and Shaw, the two most notable of modern English dramatists, cannot be represented. Among the more interesting plays by Barrie are "The Admirable Crichton," "Peter Pan," "What Every Woman Knows," "A Kiss for Cinderella," and "Dear Brutus." Among the plays by Shaw outstanding ones are "Arms and the Man," "Candida," "You Never Can Tell," "The Devil's Disciple," "Cæsar and

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Cleopatra," "Man and Superman," "Androcles and the Lion," "Pygmalion," and "Saint Joan."

The plays of Barrie and Shaw, like those of Shakespeare, are most accessible in volumes devoted to the individual authors. Most other contemporary playwrights, especially the authors of one-act plays, are well represented in the numerous and excellent collections of recent years, many of which are listed here in the Bibliography.

In this volume the Introduction and critical sketches are meant to afford enough background for an intelligent reading of the plays. While no attempt has been made to furnish new critical texts of the plays, care has been exercised to avoid corrupt and unintelligible readings. In the footnotes it has been my purpose to answer such questions as those which come up in my own classes — questions which editors too often pass over entirely or bury under a monument of details. I have endeavored throughout to enable the student to understand the plays in order to enjoy them.

For coöperation or advice I am under obligations to my colleagues Professors H. H. Carter, A. C. Judson, and L. J. Mills. For assistance in the preparation of this book I am deeply indebted to my wife.

J. R. M.

Bloomington, Indiana

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INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH DRAMA

1. *Drama a Social Art.* Drama differs from other forms of literature in being a social art, dependent on groups of people for its presentation and its enjoyment. Any other form of literature can be adequately expressed on printed pages, or by the mouth of a singer or a speaker. Sometimes a poet, as William Blake or Walt Whitman, has even dispensed with the printer, engraving his own poems or setting them in type for himself. But a playwright furnishes only a part of the presentation of a drama, and even the reader of a play misses most of its force unless he can imagine it as being acted before him.

2. *Actors, Stage Management, and Audience.* On the stage, in addition to the text of the play, are the actors and the stage management; in front is the audience. It is possible for a badly written play to be acted so well that it is very effective. It is possible for a play to be so presented by the "producer" that playwright and actors alike become unimportant. In our own time Gordon Craig, one of the most gifted of producers, has desired a silent theater, with no dialogue and with puppets instead of human actors. There has recently been a great revival of puppet-shows, but in these the puppet-masters who manipulate the strings usually speak the lines as well. And since the time of John Rich, an actor of two centuries ago who spoke very badly but excelled in the old art of pantomime, it has usually been customary for harlequinades to be presented with expressive action but without words.

In front of the stage, and sometimes beside it, above it, or on it, the audience exerts an influence which it is impossible to esti-

mate. In the earlier dramas the first actors often begged the audience for room to perform their play. In Shakespeare's time the lords' box overlooked the stage, and the gilded youths sitting on the stage often blocked the actors with their dangling swords and outstretched legs. As late as 1721 a riot took place in the Lincoln's Inn Fields theater, because a gentleman of fashion crossed the stage to speak to a friend, and slapped the actor who remonstrated with him. The use of pea-shooters or the hurling of missiles from the audience was fairly common in the eighteenth century, and even occurs occasionally in the lower-class theaters of our own time. The large auditoriums of a century ago, in which actors had to speak very distinctly to be heard, were a principal cause in the development of a declamatory style of acting.

But far more important than the physical influence of the audience is its psychological attitude. The playwright is conscious of the audience as he writes; his constant endeavor to reach his audience has given rise to the saying that "a play is not written but re-written." No other form of literature is so often revised to suit the tastes of a new audience. Many of Shakespeare's plays were revised from older ones; and even most of Shakespeare's plays have been — very foolishly, it seems to us — adapted and cut and changed to suit the different generations of theatergoers since his time.

The actors are so conscious of the audience that it is very difficult for them to act to an unresponsive audience, and almost impossible to act to an empty house. The mad king Ludwig of Bavaria, who had operas performed for himself alone, asked a very difficult thing. A far better audience is that of La Scala opera house in Milan, where the music-loving Italians vehemently applaud the successful performer or hiss down the unfortunate one.

It is by the perfect balance of playwright, actors, stage management, and audience that the best plays are produced. When the playwright is too conscious of his own work as literature, he

is likely to produce "closet drama," a story in dialogue which does not suggest life to the reader and which almost never satisfies an audience. When the actors are too prominent, as they were in the last part of the eighteenth century and in much of the nineteenth, the play is sacrificed for stagy effects. The old actor preferred a long speech that he could "get his teeth in," and claptrap modifications of such plays as "Richard III" held the stage for a century or more because they were full of "points" for the actor to score by voice or gesture. When the stage management is inadequate, the action is likely to be hampered — although some remarkable achievements have been secured by plays presented out of doors, or without scenery, or in modern dress. When the stage management is too elaborate, as often in the last century or two, the play is likely to be lost in the mechanical aids; one goes to the theater to see a Belasco sunset or scene in hell, a chariot race or a live bloodhound, "real water and living ladies."

The greatest drama has been produced when all four influences have been fairly harmonious. Shakespeare, for instance, was himself an actor and wrote for the finest company in Europe. The stage management of his age seems to us relatively crude, but it was extremely effective for its purposes, providing the actors with swift changes of scene and the audience with just enough setting to feed its imagination. The audience, ranging from the gentlemen of fashion to the lowest commoners, was highly appreciative, and it was representative. It is often said that drama is an aristocratic art; but it thrives best, as in the Elizabethan age, when national feeling is strong and when the ruling classes are not out of touch with the common people.

In some later dramatic periods, when one social class or another has ceased to go to the theater, the drama has suffered. Never since the Elizabethan period has the drama been so widely popular as it was then, and it has paid the price of its more specialized appeal. Too often it has become merely intellectual or sentimental or sensational, obscene or moralistic or propagan-

dist, according to the particular type of audience for which it was intended.

3. *Drama, Spectacle, and Show.* The great drama of the world is in literary form, expressed in language which makes a permanent appeal to the reason and emotion of mankind. In addition, there is a vast amount of dramatic writing which has little value as literature, but which does provide the actors and stage management with opportunities for effective plays. These plays are often popular with their own audiences, but their appeal is not permanent. Lesser dramatic forms, such as pantomime and dancing, make their appeal in an artistic manner, with gesture and motion replacing the use of words.

But there is a constant tendency on the part of producers or audiences, less often of actors or even playwrights, to substitute mechanical ingenuity or personal oddity for dramatic art. Mediocre plays have often succeeded because of such spectacular devices as a water-cave, a fire scene, or a new system of stage lighting; by the death rattle of a dying heroine, an eleven-year-old tragedian, or a woman acting as Hamlet; by costumes or incidental music or trained animals. It is true that the greatest dramatists have used spectacular devices in a subordinate way; there are abundant evidences of them in Shakespeare, as the trained dog in "The Two Gentlemen of Verona," the devouring bear in "A Winter's Tale," and the disappearing banquet in "The Tempest." However, the chief rivals of serious drama in Shakespeare's time were such spectacles as bear baiting, as the chief rivals in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were animal shows, ladder dances, musical glasses, low pantomime, and burlettas. Drama is no longer a great social art when it sinks to mere spectacle, "inexplicable dumb shows and noise." One of the worst symptoms of the drama in our own time is this: the man in the street refers to all dramatic entertainments as "shows."

A special reason why this is so important is that drama relies upon popular approval for its financial support. An architect or

a painter may be employed by an enlightened government or by a wealthy patron, or a poet may be reduced to circulating "his sugared sonnets among his private friends"; but vital drama is not possible without the public theater. Sometimes, as in ancient Athens, drama has made a wide popular appeal, but has received financial support from wealthy patrons and from the state. Sometimes, as in France, the classical theaters have been regularly subsidized by the state, so as to be partly free from the control of the box office. Sometimes, as in the Middle Ages and again in our own time, plays have been sponsored by trade guilds, schools, civic organizations, or private societies.

But it is clear that a genuine national drama must be a representative institution. The subsidized national theater, if it gets out of touch with its times, becomes too conservative; the theater of the private group often becomes specialized or propagandist. Worst of all, the theater dependent entirely on box-office receipts may resort to spectacle in order to draw crowds, or in our own time it may fall into the hands of big business interests and be syndicated for profit only.

In a study of the drama of any period it is important to know who attended the theaters, what the audiences wanted to see and hear, and how the performances were financed.

4. *Drama an Imitation of Life.* Drama is a social art in its subject matter as well as in its form. It presents some relationship of human beings, and it is never complete until the characters actually assume their parts and imitate life. Whereas simple narrative and simple poetry tell a story or describe a scene or express an emotion, *drama presents characters through imitative action.*

Any poem or story may be read aloud, and most stories make some use of dialogue. Often a public speaker will read dialogue in a lifelike way, giving what is called "a dramatic reading." But if the characters in a dialogue are assigned to different speakers who really assume their parts, we have not a story of life but a dramatic presentation of it.

When a play is printed but not acted, the same kind of distinction is observed. The reader imagines the different characters as acting before him, and the playwright lets the characters speak for themselves, avoiding all the author's interpretative remarks which are customary in novels. Sometimes the playwright has so much to say to the reader that he overflows from the long stage directions and the longer prefaces into the dialogue itself; the characters cease to be men and women, and become mouthpieces for the author. This is a serious fault, and only such a brilliant writer as George Bernard Shaw can hope to justify such a practice to his audience. An even worse fault is the bookishness of "closet drama," from which the reader is conscious of the literary style of the author and perhaps of his high aspirations, but from which he receives no feeling of life; the story seems unreal, the characters mere abstractions or names. Occasionally "closet drama" has enough literary merit to charm a reader, but no brilliancy of dialogue can make it seem a living thing on the stage.

AN OUTLINE OF THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH DRAMA

There are three outstanding periods in English drama: the Elizabethan (1576–1642), the Restoration (1660–1707), and the Contemporary (1892–). In each of these periods permanent work has been achieved in distinctive styles by whole schools of playwrights; and each period, despite its faults or shortcomings, has made important contributions to the development of English drama. The other periods, from the beginning to 1576, from 1642 to 1660, and from 1707 to 1892, may be looked on in such a general survey as this as introductory or transitional. A few important writers, such as Goldsmith or Sheridan, stand out in transitional periods, but they may be regarded not unfairly as survivors of an older dramatic school or as forerunners of a new one.

Introduction to English Drama

Greek and Latin drama, already declining, was extinguished by the spread of Christianity and by the decay of the older civilizations. During the Middle Ages there was a certain continuity of the art of the strolling entertainer, performing in the street or in the feudal hall. There were in the villages of the later Middle Ages some crude folk plays of a traditional character, such as the mummers' play described by Thomas Hardy in "The Return of the Native." But the old literary dramas of the classical stage were forgotten, except among a few scholars who studied them only for the sake of the language. All sense of dramatic form was lost; and drama began again, as it had begun in Greece, in religious worship and in the acting out of the religious stories which were the common heritage of all the people.

In the sixth century the use of antiphons, or responsive choruses, became common in the Catholic churches of western Europe; and by the ninth century the Easter service, already almost dramatic in its representation, was being expanded by an inserted text called a trope, which was really a brief drama of the Resurrection. England was in close contact with the Continent, especially in all matters pertaining to the Church; and as early as 959–979 this Easter trope, known as the *Quem quaeritis* because of its first line, was preserved in the "Concordia Regularis" of Ethelwold, bishop of Winchester, from the third nocturn at matins on Easter morning. Sir Edmund K. Chambers, in his great work "The Mediaeval Stage," translates it as follows:

> While the third lesson is being chanted, let four brethren vest themselves. Let one of these, vested in an alb, enter as though to take part in the service, and let him approach the sepulchre without attracting attention and sit there quietly with a palm in his hand. While the third respond is chanted, let the remaining three follow, and let them all, vested in copes, bearing in their hands thuribles with incense, and stepping delicately as those who seek something, approach the sepulchre. These things are done in imitation of the angel sitting in the monument, and the women with spices coming to

anoint the body of Jesus. When therefore he who sits there beholds the three approach him like folk lost and seeking something, let him begin in a dulcet voice of medium pitch to sing *Quem quaeritis*. And when he has sung it to the end, let the three reply in unison *Ihesu Nazarenum*. So he, *Non est hic, surrexit sicut praedixerat. Ite, nuntiate quia surrexit a mortuis*. At the word of this bidding let those three turn to the choir and say *Alleluia! resurrexit Dominus!* This said, let the one, still sitting there and as if recalling them, say the anthem *Venite et videte locum*. And saying this, let him rise, and lift the veil, and show them the place bare of the cross, but only the cloths laid there in which the cross was wrapped. And when they have seen this, let them set down the thuribles which they bare in that same sepulchre, and take the cloth, and hold it up in the face of the clergy, and as if to demonstrate that the Lord has risen and is no longer wrapped therein, let them sing the anthem *Surrexit Dominus de sepulchro*, and lay the cloth upon the altar. When the anthem is done, let the prior, sharing in their gladness at the triumph of our King, in that, having vanquished death, He rose again, begin the hymn *Te Deum laudamus*. And this begun, all the bells chime out together.

From this beginning at Easter another dramatic trope developed in the very similar Christmas service, with its parallel scene of the manger and the infant Jesus, Joseph and Mary, and the three shepherds or three magi. Other scenes from the Bible were dramatized and greatly expanded. All these plays were at first in Latin and were given in the church. But the dialogue was gradually changed from the priestly Latin to the more familiar language of conversation, with only the hymns and fragments of the church service remaining in Latin until at last even these were displaced by English songs. And the performances expanded from the altar until they occupied the church, and then moved into the open churchyard and finally into the public squares. As the Church gradually relinquished control of the plays, they were taken over sometimes by the town corporation, but more often by the principal secular organizations of the Middle Ages, the trade guilds.

Introduction to English Drama

In 1311 the reëstablishment of the great annual religious festival of Corpus Christi nearly nine weeks after Easter, in the best possible season for out-of-door performances, gave a nucleus for the further development of popular religious drama. For over two centuries after this the miracle plays grew in popularity, and the last important survival seems to have been "The Destruction of Jerusalem" at Coventry in 1584. These plays are all called miracles or miracle plays. A rather foolish distinction has been devised by some modern writers, according to which the more common plays on Bible stories are called mysteries and the infrequent plays on the later saints and martyrs of the Church are called miracles. This distinction is a poor one, because there were few "miracles" of this special kind in England, because the word "mysteries" was not used in this sense in England, and because the name "miracles" was generally used for all plays of either sort.

The miracles or guild plays showed little sense of connection or of dramatic form. Bible scenes were presented on pageant wagons in a fairly conventional order, from the creation of Adam and Eve to some scene in the New Testament. Each guild, or sometimes each group of the weaker guilds, presented its scene, the whole series occupying one long day or several successive days.

There was no reason to vary greatly from the Bible stories as they were generally understood. All popular ceremonies tend to be conservative; and the Bible stories were certainly the best known and the best liked that could be had. The sense of religious devotion continued in these plays until the Reformation; but the men of the Middle Ages expressed their emotions freely in their religious plays, just as they made comical figures in the stone vaulting of Lincoln Cathedral or in the carved wooden seats of the cathedral at Chester. Considerable pathos crept into some plays, but no complete tragedy; more important was the broad sense of fun. Evil characters such as the Devil, tyrants such as Herod or the High Priest, scolds such as Noah's wife,

were given a comic and realistic development utterly unlike anything in the Bible. Noah's wife must have been an especially familiar type among the uneducated wom[illegible]he English villages.

The influence of the miracles on later drama may be briefly summed up: They prepared for the later chronicle or history plays by their free use of narrative records. They developed the native English sense of fun, and satiric realism in portraying village life of comic characters. They began the tradition of the comic vicious character, or Vice. They developed the use of the dramatic song, the platform stage, the popular dramatic performance, and many other features which were most characteristic in Elizabethan drama.

The morality plays, of which "Everyman" is the finest example, developed a little later. Like the miracle plays, they sprang from the Church, and they were usually presented out of doors. But as the miracle plays had sprung from the old religious stories, and so were concrete and personal, the moralities sprang from the medieval love of allegory, and were more like dramatized sermons. The morality has been defined as "an allegory cast in the form of a play." Its usual theme was that of the vices and virtues in conflict for man's soul, somewhat as in the writings of John Bunyan.

On the other hand, the moralities were not tied down to the past by the Bible stories, and so they tended to become entirely contemporary and realistic. They were far more dramatic than the miracle plays, moving through a temptation and struggle toward a definite conclusion. Some of the virtues remained completely abstract, but often the hero and usually the vicious characters became very human. In its later stages the morality tended to lose its allegory and to become more purely comic in character.

The chief contributions made by the moralities may be summed up as follows: They afforded an escape from the traditional fixed cycle of Bible stories. They introduced more real-

ism, more comedy, more sense of character, and a more connected story. In the conflict for the soul of man there is something a good deal like plot.

The miracle plays gradually broke down during the decline of the trade guilds and in the religious controversies of the Reformation. The moralities were clipped to brief moral interludes to be performed indoors, or lost their allegory entirely and became popular interludes. The way was now open for secular plays of a new type, and models were provided by the Renaissance, with its enthusiasm for the classics.

Greek drama was too little known to have much influence; but the Latin writers Plautus and Seneca were high favorites, especially at the schools and colleges, where they were translated, adapted, or imitated, read, and acted. The comedies of Plautus suggested a number of plots and comic types, and something of a theory of comedy. Seneca's melodramatic qualities made him a special favorite. To his tragedies are due the spoken chorus, the long moralizings, the revenge plot, the ghost, and the five-act division of Elizabethan tragedy.

In 1576 the first regular theater in England was constructed, just north of London to avoid the restraint of the Puritan city fathers, and modeled after the old innyards in which public plays were still being given. By 1600 there were probably six important theaters in operation, and in 1610 the number was seven. Most theaters were "public," and were erected outside the city on the south side of the river Thames or just beyond the city walls; but a few were "private" theaters operating by special privileges inside the city itself. These last charged higher prices for admission, made use of artificial light, and occupied inclosed rooms instead of the unroofed auditoriums of the larger public theaters.

The defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 aroused England to an extraordinary national feeling, and the glorious later years of Elizabeth's reign gave rise to a dramatic achievement which did not entirely end until 1642, thirty-nine years after her death.

The chronicles of Holinshed and the romantic tales of Italy and France had provided new material for the playwrights. The patriotic history or chronicle play became a favorite dramatic type, and the romantic stories of Italy gave new life to the older conceptions of tragedy and comedy.

For the first time England developed playwrights, actors, stage management, and audiences adequate for great drama. To us the stage itself may seem bare and insufficient, but it must be remembered that our expectations are different from those of earlier audiences. The mechanical wonders of a generation ago are commonplace to every child today; the Elizabethan playgoer was satisfied with the stage of his own time because he expected nothing more elaborate.

Besides, the stage was really a very remarkable achievement within its limits. It was a platform around which the audience stood on the ground or sat in balconies or on the sides of the stage so that the actor must have seemed very near and real to them. The front stage was used for any neutral or unspecified place, and required no more scenery than the management chose to give it. The alcove at the back could be curtained or opened, and served to give a deeper stage or to provide a new room — Juliet's tomb, Desdemona's bed chamber, or the dumb show in "Hamlet." The balcony above served for the city wall on which the proud burghers bade defiance to the besiegers below; or it could be Juliet's balcony or Sylvia's window. The roof above the stage could be used for machinery to raise or lower heavy furniture, or it could serve as the heavens from which supernatural beings appeared. There were trapdoors in the front stage and alcove alike for the appearance of ghosts or secret visitants. The doors at the sides of the stage afforded easy entrance or exit. There was no front curtain, so that heavy stage properties had to be removed in full sight of the audience — unless they were inside the alcove, which could be curtained. The actors, having no convenient drop-curtain, were obliged to leave the stage at the end of a play; and so comedies ended with

joyful departures to weddings or to banquets, and tragedies with solemn processions bearing off the dead.

The public stage was in daylight, as the plays began at two o'clock; but darkness was suggested by such devices as torches or lanterns, the summoning of characters in their night-clothes to the upper windows, or the poet's description. The same poetic description was used to furnish what might be missed in stage setting or in the atmosphere of a scene. The cliffs of Dover and the Forest of Arden were indicated by poetry rather than by flats or back drops; and to this is due much of the deathless beauty of the plays. Morning and evening were not mere manipulations of lighting effects, but they gave an opportunity for passionate utterance in which the speaker showed his own character and the workings of his mind. To Romeo the dawn is a thing of beauty:

> Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
> Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops."

To Macbeth the coming of night is akin to the workings of his own evil-haunted mind:

> Come, seeling night,
> Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful day,
> And with thy bloody and invisible hand
> Cancel and tear to pieces that great bond
> Which keeps me pale! Light thickens, and the crow
> Makes wing to the rooky wood;
> Good things of day begin to droop and drowse,
> Whiles night's black agents to their preys do rouse.

The action seems to have been very rapid, with slight pauses between the acts and none between most scenes, so that two hours was a common time for the performance of a complete play. Many of the scenes, which modern editors have assigned to "a street" or "another room in the palace," were not thought of as being anywhere in particular. The characters met on the

front of the stage and conversed, but no precise place was in anyone's mind.

Boys took the women's parts, and there were far more men's parts in a play than women's. Plays were frequently revived, but they were not given consecutive runs, so that the actors were trained in several plays at once. The principal actors were likely to be shareholders in their theaters, and grew to be men of wealth and position. By law actors were rogues and vagabonds, liable to be whipped; but in practice they were nominally "servants" of some noble patron, and so they appeared not as a group of players but as the "Lord Chamberlain's men" or the "Admiral's men," entitled to all the honors due to the servants of such a patron. Companies of boys known as the "Children," particularly the singers of the Chapel Royal or of St. Paul's, were for a time trained to act in the private theaters, and were important rivals of the men's companies.

The audience itself, although in part uneducated, must have been an enthusiastic and appreciative one. The remarkable number of playhouses supported by the relatively small city of London, and the prosperity of the principal theaters, show how well the plays were attended.

Before 1642 the creative force of the Elizabethan age was waning. Plays appealed more to the decadent Stuart court and less to the whole nation. The Puritans grew in strength, and many of the better minds of the age ceased to be associated with the theater. A feverish tone pervades many of the later Elizabethan plays; they are exaggerated in their heroic quality, or in their romance, or in their coarse realism. The theater ranged itself with Charles I in the struggle against Parliament, and so it became a factional rather than a national institution. From 1642 to 1660 the Puritans were in full power in London, and the theaters were officially closed by act of Parliament. There are evidences of illegal performances in various places, and even of some connivance on the part of officials; the music-loving Cromwell himself permitted some half-musical, half-dramatic

performances, but the drama was chiefly a memory of the old days until the restoration of the Stuarts in 1660.

Although the last Stuart king was banished in 1688, Restoration drama lasted until the death of Farquhar in 1707. The Restoration age is often dismissed as one of license and immorality, but that is only one aspect of the time. In civil life it was an era of great architecture and of scientific discovery, of philosophy and of freedom of conscience and speech, of expanding commerce and improved arts of life. Drama was highly artificial, centering largely about the court. The middle-class citizens were referred to contemptuously as "cits," and most of them did not attend theatrical performances. Far fewer theaters were needed than in Shakespeare's age — only two licensed, or patent, houses being permitted most of the time. The fashionable tone of the court naturally found expression on the stage.

But the accomplishments of Restoration drama are very considerable. On the stage it introduced women actors, and it made a regular practice of indoor performances and of the use of perspective scenery. It employed drop-scenes frequently, and occasionally the drop-curtain (although the modern use of the front curtain as a principal feature of stage management was delayed until the nineteenth century). It greatly developed stage machinery and the use of stage properties, and it reduced the old platform stage to an oval "apron" projecting from the rear stage into the audience. On this apron the principal action took place, and the asides could be addressed directly to the audience. The actors were exceptionally fine, with the great Betterton at their head.

In dramatic theory it made the most systematic effort that has ever been made to reduce English drama to orderly rules and to make it a perfect art. French influence was in the ascendant after the return of Charles and his followers from France, and the French at this time were devoted to the elaboration of dramatic rules. All that Aristotle had said about Greek drama had been seized on, added to and changed, and then laid down

in the form of "classical rules." A play was required to take place in one day, in one place, and with one plot. Tragedies were to deal with the aristocracy and to be free from comic scenes. In comedies the aristocracy were to have the principal parts, people of lower ranks the subordinate or broadly comic parts. The speech of the principals was to be exalted, like their station in life, and tragedies were to be elevated by being written in rimed couplets. English drama, like all things English, was not fond enough of rules to submit to such strict regulations; but some effort at conformity was made by the playwrights, and a permanent influence on English drama resulted. Later dramatists would hesitate to undertake the complication of four plots in one play, or the daring admixture of tragedy and broad comedy which occurred so frequently in Elizabethan drama.

In dramatic writing its greatest achievement was the artificial comedy of manners, which culminated in Congreve's "The Way of the World" with the most brilliant dialogue and in some ways the finest comedy in English. It produced some excellent tragedies more or less patterned after Elizabethan models, notably Dryden's "All for Love" and Otway's "Venice Preserved." It introduced from Spain the comedy of complicated plot, called the comedy of intrigue; it continued with some success the comedy of humors which had been perfected by Ben Jonson; and it developed and then abandoned the heroic play, a substitute for tragedy with rhetorical speeches and a happy ending.

The main characteristic of eighteenth-century drama is that it appealed chiefly to the growing middle class. To this is principally due the sharp revolt against the cynical tone of Restoration comedy which led to the opposite extremes of sentimental comedy, bourgeois tragedy, the "moralizing of the stage," and the decline and death of literary art. The aristocracy preferred more fashionable amusements, such as the new Italian operas; the lower classes did not go to the theater, or they preferred spectacular shows to drama.

Some of the specific influences which account for the decline of dramatic literature after 1707 are these:

1. The royal families were unfavorable to poetry. Queen Anne, a lonely invalid who never attended the public theaters, was succeeded by George I, a German prince who could not speak English, and he by his son George II, who cared as little for drama as for what he called "bainting and boetry." During the entire century there was no ruler whose influence was helpful to English drama; indeed, since Charles II there has been no king or queen who has been a distinguished patron of the theater.

2. The Wesleyan revival, one of the great social movements of the age, was very unfavorable to drama. The followers of Wesley and Whitefield usually avoided the theater. Even more unfavorable was the influence of the moralists who wrote plays of the sort which the French called "weeping comedies."

3. The Licensing Act of 1737, requiring that all plays must be approved by the Lord Chamberlain before they could be produced, made managers especially unwilling to experiment with new plays. It was much cheaper, as well as safer, to revive old plays, and the tradition of the theater itself was in favor of revivals and adaptations, with brilliant acting rather than great original drama.

4. The foremost writers at the end of the eighteenth century and during most of the nineteenth were out of touch with the theater or had no strong talent for it, and they wrote "closet drama" rather than real plays. Charles Lamb, one of the keenest and most sympathetic students of drama, was disappointed with the failure of his own play and declared that he would "write for antiquity."

5. The influences of foreign drama, which had been so stimulating in the Elizabethan and Restoration periods, were almost all bad. Sentimentality came from France, melodrama and horror from Germany. Italian opera singers and French dancers at times almost crowded English drama from the stage.

6. The limitation of the number of licensed theaters was a disastrous influence. It allowed a number of "illegitimate" theaters to develop in competition with the patent theaters; but it compelled them to emphasize musical interludes, burlettas, and acrobatics in order to avoid the appearance of being "legitimate" theaters. This licensed monopoly of the standard plays, such as those of Shakespeare, put an actual premium on lower forms of entertainment, and restricted the production of good drama.

But there were many single noteworthy achievements. The immortal ballad-opera of John Gay, "The Beggar's Opera," the witty satires of Henry Fielding, and the great plays of Goldsmith and Sheridan, together with a considerable number of interesting and competent plays of less permanent appeal, keep the age from being barren.

In the nineteenth century the abolition of patent restrictions in 1843 was expected to produce a revolution in the drama; but the public which had grown up in the democratic and industrial nineteenth century preferred miscellaneous entertainment to Shakespeare, and the newly freed "illegitimate" theaters did not change their programs very greatly. Improvements were made in stage realism — especially in costuming, in lighting, and in elaborate settings; but drama did not reach a very high level again until the contemporary period began about 1892.

At this time the conditions which made for great drama began to reappear in England. An unusual number of competent playwrights became inspired by the scientific thought of the age and by the influences of dramatic awakening in other countries, especially by the personal genius of the Norwegian Ibsen. The brilliant stylist Wilde seemed at last to have something to say, and undertook problem plays in "Lady Windermere's Fan" (1892) and later works. Pinero, who had been known only as a popular playwright, achieved real distinction in "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" (1893), from which many writers prefer to date the beginning of contemporary drama. Jones in his "Michael and his

Lost Angel" (1896) rose to a level of achievement of which his early success in melodrama had given little promise. Greater literary men, who had begun by writing novels or criticism, were attracted, like Shaw and Barrie, to dramatic composition. Cities which had made little contribution to creative drama, such as Manchester, Birmingham, and Dublin, found in the drama means of local or national expression. The gradual passing of the great actor-managers helped to transfer the emphasis from acting to dramatic composition, and the adoption of international copyright in 1891 helped to protect the playwrights of England and America against the easy importation of the all too popular plays from France.

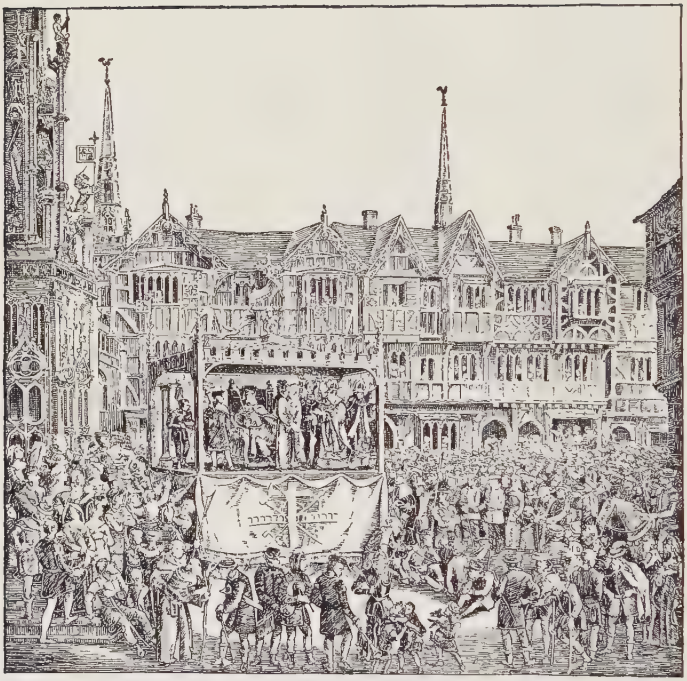
For the first time in nearly two centuries the stage became a vital expression of the thought of the age. Drama had become an international art; no country in Europe or America could long remain ignorant of movements elsewhere. Not only did playwrights, producers, and professional critics adopt ideas from abroad, but whole companies of players traveled more freely than ever before. Acting and stage management were adapted to the new style of drama, with smaller theaters, more intelligent audiences, and simpler and more harmonious acting and setting. If the early contemporary drama fell short, it was not in being inert and traditional, but in being too fond of experiment, too much given to propaganda, too exclusively intellectual.

The World War caused an interruption of men's thoughts as well as of their artistic activities. Its feverish emphasis on the desire for entertainment has not yet ceased to leave its mark on society. Again, the sudden wealth of uncultivated people, although it may be partly responsible for the remarkable prices paid for old pictures and books, has not been a wholesome influence on the drama. Perhaps most important of all, the cynicism of post-war disillusionment and the mechanistic theories of life which have been widely accepted have tended to cripple dramatic expression. Pinero contended a generation ago that the public no longer cared for the satiric realism of comedy; and also that

democratic society no longer makes possible the high comedy of manners, which depended on an artificial grace of life unknown to us today. A recent writer has argued that tragedy is equally impossible for us; that we cannot write of man's triumph in the face of defeat, because we no longer believe in ourselves. Some of the most active minds of the theater are engaged in production as an art in itself, overshadowing all other aspects of the drama. Some others are abandoning serious drama for the lucrative composition of plays of mystery and crime.

The most hopeful signs in America are to be seen in the Theatre Guild, the Little Theater movement, the Drama League, and the study of dramatic art in colleges and schools. It was from the schools that English drama acquired the first sense of form, which lifted the broad comedy of the miracle plays to the level of "Ralph Roister Doister" and prepared the way for Shakespeare. When a more intelligent audience goes to the theater, and when the stage becomes a means of expressing the real thoughts and feelings of the people, their frustration and their aspiration, the dramatists will not be far behind.

REPRESENTATIVE ENGLISH DRAMAS



THE PRESENTATION OF A MIRACLE PLAY

THE MORALITY

EVERYMAN: AUTHOR UNKNOWN

Morality plays did not arise until after the miracles, based on Bible stories or the lives of saints, were well developed. It was believed that the petitions in the Lord's Prayer gave aid against the seven deadly sins; and the first known morality (1378) was a dramatization of the Paternoster, or Lord's Prayer. The oldest surviving morality ("The Castle of Perseverance," about 1400) shows the contest for the soul of man between the sins and the corresponding virtues. A century later the plays were narrowed to a single idea and became more dramatic. Shortly afterwards, during the Reformation and the Renaissance, moralities were written for religious controversy or to illustrate the value of learning. From 1600, with rare exceptions, no morality was acted for three hundred years. Early in the twentieth century "Everyman" was successfully revived; and during the past ten years a new movement for the presentation of religious plays in churches has developed.

"Everyman" was composed during the fifteenth century, and it is preserved in four undated editions which must have appeared between 1493 and 1537. A Dutch play, "Elckerlijk," which was printed somewhat earlier, is generally regarded as the source of "Everyman"; but some critics hold that they go back to a common source. "Everyman" has come down to us as a genuinely English play, although it is more serious in tone and more devoid of comic relief than most English moralities.

Editors usually modernize the spelling and punctuation, and some furnish stage directions for entrances and exits. But in "Everyman," as in most of the early plays, the action is clearly

suggested by the speeches. The reader should remember that although most characters make regular entrances, God speaks unseen, and Good-Deeds, Goods, and perhaps Confession, are "discovered" as by the raising of a curtain. Priesthood does not appear at all, but is visited off stage by Everyman. In Ben Greet's revival Goods and Good-Deeds occupied booths on opposite sides of the stage with a raised platform for the grave between them at the back.

The play is in rimed verse throughout, although some of the rime words seem to have been lost and others are hard for modern readers to recognize as correct rimes. The verse is fairly smooth if the reader will emphasize heavily the accented syllables (usually four to a line) and hasten over all the unaccented ones.

Several passages, where the play teaches the doctrines and practices of the church, upholding the dignity of the priestly office and the merit of penance and the confessional, seem to indicate clerical authorship. Knowledge attacks unworthy priests; but he is answered by Five-Wits, who expresses his loyalty to the priesthood.

After Everyman's death, Knowledge says:

> "Methinketh that I hear angels sing
> And make great joy and melody,
> Where Everyman's soul received shall be."

It is possible, but not at all certain, that an off-stage choir sang a Latin hymn just before this speech. For a detailed study of the dramatic use of angelic singing in the miracles and moralities see my article on "The Tradition of Angelic Singing in English Drama," in *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, January, 1923, Vol. XXII.

The morality was an allegorical play, with its chief characters types or personified abstractions, and its main object the teaching of a moral lesson. It lost something of the human appeal of the Bible stories in the miracles; but it usually pictured

the present instead of the past, and it dramatized the development of character in the conflict between good and evil, wisdom and folly, or man's earthly desires and the power of death. In "Everyman" the Messenger and the Doctor are conventional expository characters. God is an individual. Death, although an abstraction, is one of the most effective figures in modern revivals. The others are abstractions or types, with Everyman the only character showing real development. He moves swiftly from thoughtless gayety to despair, and at last to prostration at the grave. "Everyman" is a deeply moving play to a modern audience; it must have been almost overpowering in the early sixteenth century.

EVERYMAN

CHARACTERS

Everyman	Kindred	Beauty
God: Adonai	Goods	Knowledge
Death	Good-Deeds	Confession
Messenger	Strength	Angel
Fellowship	Discretion	Doctor
Cousin	Five-Wits	

Here beginneth a treatise how the High Father of Heaven sendeth death to summon every creature to come and give account of their lives in this world and is in manner of a moral play.

Messenger. I pray you all give your audience,
And hear this matter with reverence,
By figure[1] a moral play —
The "Summoning of Everyman" called it is,
That of our lives and ending shows
How transitory we be all day.
This matter is wondrous precious,
But the intent of it is more gracious,
And sweet to bear away.
The story saith, — Man, in the beginning,
Look well, and take good heed to the ending,
Be you never so gay!
Ye think sin in the beginning full sweet,
Which in the end causeth thy soul to weep,
When the body lieth in clay.
Here shall you see how Fellowship and Jollity,

[1] in form.

Both Strength, Pleasure, and Beauty,
Will fade from thee as flower in May.
For ye shall hear, how our Heaven King
Calleth Everyman to a general reckoning:
Give audience, and hear what he doth say.

God. I perceive here in my majesty,
How that all creatures be to me unkind,
Living without dread in worldly prosperity:
Of ghostly[1] sight the people be so blind,
Drowned in sin, they know me not for their God;
In worldly riches is all their mind,
They fear not my rightwiseness, the sharp rod;
My law that I showed, when I for them died,
They forget clean, and shedding of my blood red;
I hanged between two, it cannot be denied;
To get them life I suffered to be dead;
I healed their feet, with thorns hurt was my head:
I could do no more than I did truly,
And now I see the people do clean forsake me.
They use the seven deadly sins damnable;
As pride, covetise, wrath, and lechery,
Now in the world be made commendable;
And thus they leave of angels the heavenly company;
Everyman liveth so after his own pleasure,
And yet of their life they be nothing sure:
I see the more that I them forbear
The worse they be from year to year;
All that liveth appaireth[2] fast,
Therefore I will in all the haste
Have a reckoning of Everyman's person;
For and[3] I leave the people thus alone
In their life and wicked tempests,
Verily they will become much worse than beasts;
For now one would by envy another up eat;

[1] spiritual. [2] decays, is impaired. [3] if.

Charity they all do clean forget.
I hoped well that Everyman
In my glory should make his mansion,
And thereto I had them all elect;
But now I see, like traitors deject,
They thank me not for the pleasure that I to them meant,
Nor yet for their being that I them have lent;
I proffered the people great multitude of mercy,
And few there be that asketh it heartily;
They be so cumbered with worldly riches,
That needs on them I must do justice,
On Everyman living without fear.
Where art thou, Death, thou mighty messenger?

DEATH. Almighty God, I am here at your will,
Your commandment to fulfill.

GOD. Go thou to Everyman,
And show him in my name
A pilgrimage he must on him take,
Which he in no wise may escape;
And that he bring with him a sure reckoning
Without delay or any tarrying.

DEATH. Lord, I will in the world go run over all,
And cruelly outsearch both great and small;
Every man will I beset that liveth beastly
Out of God's laws, and dreadeth not folly:
He that loveth riches I will strike with my dart,
His sight to blind, and from heaven to depart,[1]
Except that alms be his good friend,
In hell for to dwell, world without end.
Lo, yonder I see Everyman walking;
Full little he thinketh on my coming;
His mind is on fleshly lusts and his treasure,
And great pain it shall cause him to endure
Before the Lord Heaven King.

[1] part.

Everyman, stand still; whither art thou going
Thus gayly? Hast thou thy Maker forget?
EVERYMAN. Why askst thou?
Wouldest thou wete?[1]
DEATH. Yea, sir, I will show you;
In great haste I am sent to thee
From God out of his majesty.
EVERYMAN. What, sent to me?
DEATH. Yea, certainly.
Though thou have forgot him here,
He thinketh on thee in the heavenly sphere,
As, or we depart, thou shalt know.
EVERYMAN. What desireth God of me?
DEATH. That shall I show thee;
A reckoning he will needs have
Without any longer respite.
EVERYMAN. To give a reckoning longer leisure I crave;
This blind matter troubleth my wit.
DEATH. On thee thou must take a long journey:
Therefore thy book of count with thee thou bring;
For turn again thou cannot by no way,
And look thou be sure of thy reckoning:
For before God thou shalt answer, and show
Thy many bad deeds and good but a few;
How thou hast spent thy life, and in what wise,
Before the chief lord of paradise.
Have ado that we were in that way,
For, wete thou well, thou shalt make none attournay.[2]
EVERYMAN. Full unready I am such reckoning to give.
I know thee not: what messenger art thou?
DEATH. I am Death, that no man dreadeth.
For every man I rest[3] and no man spareth;
For it is God's commandment
That all to me should be obedient.

[1] know. [2] advocate. [3] arrest.

EVERYMAN. O Death, thou comest when I had thee least in mind;
In thy power it lieth me to save,
Yet of my good[1] will I give thee, if ye will be kind,
Yea, a thousand pound shalt thou have,
And defer this matter till another day.

DEATH. Everyman, it may not be by no way;
I set not by gold, silver, nor riches,
Nor by pope, emperor, king, duke, nor princes.
For and I would receive gifts great,
All the world I might get;
But my custom is clean contrary.
I give thee no respite: come hence, and not tarry.

EVERYMAN. Alas, shall I have no longer respite?
I may say Death giveth no warning:
To think on thee, it maketh my heart sick,
For all unready is my book of reckoning.
But twelve year and I might have abiding,
My counting book I would make so clear,
That my reckoning I should not need to fear.
Wherefore, Death, I pray thee, for God's mercy,
Spare me till I be provided of remedy.

DEATH. Thee availeth not to cry, weep, and pray:
But haste thee lightly that you were gone the journey,
And prove thy friends if thou can.
For, wete thou well, the tide abideth no man,
And in the world each living creature
For Adam's sin must die of nature.

EVERYMAN. Death, if I should this pilgrimage take,
And my reckoning surely make,
Show me, for saint[2] charity,
Should I not come again shortly?

DEATH. No, Everyman; and thou be once there,

[1] goods.
[2] holy.

Thou mayst never more come here,
Trust me verily.

EVERYMAN. O gracious God, in the high seat celestial,
Have mercy on me in this most need;
Shall I have no company from this vale terrestrial
Of mine acquaintance that way me to lead?

DEATH. Yea, if any be so hardy,
That would go with thee and bear thee company.
Hie thee that you were gone to God's magnificence,
Thy reckoning to give before his presence.
What, weenest thou thy life is given thee,
And thy worldly goods also?

EVERYMAN. I had wend[1] so, verily.

DEATH. Nay, nay; it was but lent thee;
For as soon as thou art go,
Another awhile shall have it, and then go therefro
Even as thou hast done.
Everyman, thou art mad; thou hast thy wits five,
And here on earth will not amend thy life,
For suddenly I do come.

EVERYMAN. O wretched caitiff, whither shall I flee,
That I might scape this endless sorrow!
Now, gentle Death, spare me till to-morrow,
That I may amend me
With good advisement.

DEATH. Nay, thereto I will not consent,
Nor no man will I respite,
But to the heart suddenly I shall smite
Without any advisement.
And now out of thy sight I will me hie;
See thou make thee ready shortly,
For thou mayst say this is the day
That no man living may scape away.

EVERYMAN. Alas, I may well weep with sighs deep;

[1] thought.

Now have I no manner of company
To help me in my journey, and me to keep;
And also my writing is full unready.
How shall I do now for to excuse me?
I would to God I had never be gete![1]
To my soul a full great profit it had be;
For now I fear pains huge and great.
The time passeth; Lord, help that all wrought;
For though I mourn it availeth naught.
The day passeth, and is almost a-go;
I wot not well what for to do.
To whom were I best my complaint to make?
What, and I to Fellowship thereof spake,
And showed him of this sudden chance?
For in him is all mine affiance;[2]
We have in the world so many a day
Been good friends in sport and play.
I see him yonder, certainly;
I trust that he will bear me company;
Therefore to him will I speak to ease my sorrow.
Well met, good Fellowship, and good morrow!

FELLOWSHIP *speaketh.* Everyman, good morrow by this day.
Sir, why lookest thou so piteously?
If anything be amiss, I pray thee, me say,
That I may help to remedy.

EVERYMAN. Yea, good Fellowship, yea,
I am in great jeopardy.

FELLOWSHIP. My true friend, show to me your mind;
I will not forsake thee, unto my life's end,
In the way of good company.

EVERYMAN. That was well spoken, and lovingly.

FELLOWSHIP. Sir, I must needs know your heaviness;
I have pity to see you in any distress;

[1] been begotten.
[2] confidence.

If any have you wronged ye shall revenged be,
Though I on the ground be slain for thee,—
Though that I know before that I should die.

EVERYMAN. Verily, Fellowship, gramercy.[1]

FELLOWSHIP. Tush! by thy thanks I set not a straw.
Show me your grief, and say no more.

EVERYMAN. If I my heart should to you break,
And then you to turn your mind from me,
And would not me comfort, when you hear me speak,
Then should I ten times sorrier be.

FELLOWSHIP. Sir, I say as I will do in deed.

EVERYMAN. Then be you a good friend at need:
I have found you true here before.

FELLOWSHIP. And so ye shall evermore;
For, in faith, and thou go to hell,
I will not forsake thee by the way!

EVERYMAN. Ye speak like a good friend; I believe you well;
I shall deserve it, and I may.

FELLOWSHIP. I speak of no deserving, by this day.
For he that will say and nothing do
Is not worthy with good company to go;
Therefore show me the grief of your mind,
As to your friend most loving and kind.

EVERYMAN. I shall show you how it is;
Commanded I am to go a journey,
A long way, hard and dangerous,
And give a strait count without delay
Before the high judge Adonai.[2]
Wherefore I pray you, bear me company,
As ye have promised, in this journey.

FELLOWSHIP. That is matter indeed! Promise is duty,
But, and I should take such a voyage on me,
I know it well, it should be to my pain:

[1] thanks.
[2] God.

Also it makes me afeard, certain.
But let us take counsel here as well as we can,
For your words would fear[1] a strong man.
EVERYMAN. Why, ye said, if I had need,
Ye would me never forsake, quick nor dead,
Though it were to hell truly.
FELLOWSHIP. So I said, certainly,
But such pleasures be set aside, thee sooth to say:
And also, if we took such a journey,
When should we come again?
EVERYMAN. Nay, never again till the day of doom.
FELLOWSHIP. In faith, then will not I come there!
Who hath you these tidings brought?
EVERYMAN. Indeed, Death was with me here.
FELLOWSHIP. Now, by God that all hath bought,
If Death were the messenger,
For no man that is living to-day
I will not go that loath[2] journey —
Not for the father that begat me!
EVERYMAN. Ye promised other wise, pardie.[3]
FELLOWSHIP. I wot well I say so truly;
And yet if thou wilt eat, and drink, and make good cheer,
Or haunt to women, the lusty company,
I would not forsake you, while the day is clear,
Trust me verily!
EVERYMAN. Yea, thereto ye would be ready;
To go to mirth, solace, and play,
Your mind will sooner apply
Than to bear me company in my long journey.
FELLOWSHIP. Now, in good faith, I will not[4] that way.
But and thou wilt murder, or any man kill,
In that I will help thee with a good will!
EVERYMAN. O that is a simple advice indeed!

[1] frighten.
[2] loathsome.
[3] surely (*originally an oath*).
[4] have no desire.

Gentle fellow, help me in my necessity;
We have loved long, and now I need,
And now, gentle Fellowship, remember me.

FELLOWSHIP. Whether ye have loved me or no,
By Saint John, I will not with thee go.

EVERYMAN. Yet I pray thee, take the labor, and do so much for me
To bring me forward, for saint charity,
And comfort me till I come without the town.

FELLOWSHIP. Nay, and thou would give me a new gown,
I will not a foot with thee go;
But and you had tarried I would not have left thee so.
And as now, God speed thee in thy journey,
For from thee I will depart as fast as I may.

EVERYMAN. Whither away, Fellowship? will you forsake me?

FELLOWSHIP. Yea, by my fay,[1] to God I betake[2] thee.

EVERYMAN. Farewell, good Fellowship; for this my heart is sore;
Adieu forever, I shall see thee no more.

FELLOWSHIP. In faith, Everyman, farewell now at the end;
For you I will remember that parting is mourning.

EVERYMAN. Alack! shall we thus depart indeed?
Our Lady, help, without any more comfort,
Lo, Fellowship forsaketh me in my most need:
For help in this world whither shall I resort?
Fellowship herebefore with me would merry make;
And now little sorrow for me doth he take.
It is said, in prosperity men friends may find,
Which in adversity be full unkind.
Now whither for succor shall I flee,
Since that Fellowship hath forsaken me?
To my kinsmen I will truly,

[1] faith.
[2] commend.

Praying them to help me in my necessity;
I believe that they will do so,
For kind will creep where it may not go.[1]
I will go say,[2] for yonder I see them go.
Where be ye now, my friends and kinsmen?

KINDRED. Here be we now at your commandment.
Cousin, I pray you show us your intent
In any wise, and not spare.

COUSIN. Yea, Everyman, and to us declare
If ye be disposed to go any whither,
For wete you well, we will live and die together.

KINDRED. In wealth and woe we will with you hold,
For over his kin a man may be bold.

EVERYMAN. Gramercy, my friends and kinsmen kind.
Now shall I show you the grief of my mind:
I was commanded by a messenger,
That is an high king's chief officer;
He bade me go a pilgrimage to my pain,
And I know well I shall never come again;
Also I must give a reckoning straight,
For I have a great enemy, that hath me in wait,[3]
Which intendeth me for to hinder.

KINDRED. What account is that which ye must render?
That would I know.

EVERYMAN. Of all my works I must show
How I have lived and my days spent;
Also of ill deeds, that I have used
In my time, since life was me lent;
And of all virtues that I have refused.
Therefore I pray you go thither with me,
To help to make mine account, for saint charity.

COUSIN. What, to go thither? Is that the matter?

[1] walk. (*The proverb means that kinship compels favors when they are not willingly granted.*)

[2] assay, try.

[3] lies in wait for me.

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Nay, Everyman, I had liefer fast bread and water
All this five year and more.

EVERYMAN. Alas, that ever I was bore!
For now shall I never be merry
If that you forsake me.

KINDRED. Ah, sir; what, ye be a merry man!
Take good heart to you, and make no moan.
But one thing I warn you, by Saint Anne,
As for me, ye shall go alone.

EVERYMAN. My Cousin, will you not with me go?

COUSIN. No, by our Lady; I have the cramp in my toe.
Trust not to me, for, so God me speed,
I will deceive you in your most need.

KINDRED. It availeth not us to tice.[1]
Ye shall have my maid with all my heart;
She loveth to go to feasts, there to be nice,[2]
And to dance, and abroad to start:
I will give her leave to help you in that journey,
If that you and she may agree.

EVERYMAN. Now show me the very effect of your mind.
Will you go with me, or abide behind?

KINDRED. Abide behind? yea, that I will and I may!
Therefore farewell until another day.

EVERYMAN. How should I be merry or glad?
For fair promises to me make,
But when I have most need, they me forsake.
I am deceived; that maketh me sad.

COUSIN. Cousin Everyman, farewell now,
For verily I will not go with you;
Also of mine own an unready reckoning
I have to account; therefore I make tarrying.
Now, God keep thee, for now I go.

EVERYMAN. Ah, Jesus, is all come hereto?
Lo, fair words maketh fools fain,[3]

[1] entice. [2] wanton, wicked. [3] glad.

They promise and nothing will do certain.
My kinsmen promised me faithfully
For to abide with me steadfastly,
And now fast away do they flee:
Even so Fellowship promised me.
What friend were best me of to provide?
I lose my time here longer to abide.
Yet in my mind a thing there is;—
All my life I have loved riches;
If that my good now help me might,
He would make my heart full light.
I will speak to him in this distress.—
Where art thou, my Goods and riches?

GOODS. Who calleth me? Everyman? what haste thou hast.

I lie here in corners, trussed and piled so high,
And in chests I am locked so fast,
Also sacked in bags, thou mayst see with thine eye,
I cannot stir; in packs low I lie.
What would ye have, lightly me say.

EVERYMAN. Come hither, Good, in all the haste thou may,
For of counsel I must desire thee.

GOODS. Sir, and ye in the world have trouble or adversity,
That can I help you to remedy shortly.

EVERYMAN. It is another disease that grieveth me;
In this world it is not, I tell thee so.
I am sent for another way to go,
To give a straight account general
Before the highest Jupiter of all;
And all my life I have had joy and pleasure in thee.
Therefore I pray thee go with me,
For, peradventure, thou mayst before God Almighty
My reckoning help to clean and purify;
For it is said ever among,
That money maketh all right that is wrong.

GOODS. Nay, Everyman, I sing another song,
I follow no man in such voyages;
For and I went with thee
Thou shouldst fare much the worse for me;
For because on me thou did set thy mind,
Thy reckoning I have made blotted and blind,
That thine account thou cannot make truly;
And that hast thou for the love of me.

EVERYMAN. That would grieve me full sore,
When I should come to that fearful answer.
Up, let us go thither together.

GOODS. Nay, not so, I am too brittle, I may not endure;
I will follow no man one foot, be ye sure.

EVERYMAN. Alas, I have thee loved, and had great pleasure
All my life-days on good and treasure.

GOODS. That is to thy damnation without lesing,[1]
For my love is contrary to the love everlasting.
But if thou had me loved moderately during,[2]
As to the poor give part of me,
Then shouldst thou not in this dolor be,
Nor in this great sorrow and care.

EVERYMAN. Lo, now was I deceived or I was ware,
And all I may wyte[3] my spending of time.

GOODS. What, weenest thou that I am thine?

EVERYMAN. I had wend so.

GOODS. Nay, Everyman, I say no;
As for a while I was lent thee,
A season thou hast had me in prosperity;
My condition is man's soul to kill;
If I save one, a thousand I do spill[4];
Weenest thou that I will follow thee?
Nay, from this world, not verily.

EVERYMAN. I had wend otherwise.

[1] lying.
[2] for a while.
[3] blame to.
[4] destroy.

GOODS. Therefore to thy soul Good is a thief;
For when thou art dead, this is my guise[1]
Another to deceive in the same wise
As I have done thee, and all to his soul's reprief.[2]
EVERYMAN. O false Good, cursed thou be!
Thou traitor to God, that hast deceived me,
And caught me in thy snare.
GOODS. Marry, thou brought thyself in care,
Whereof I am glad,
I must needs laugh, I cannot be sad.
EVERYMAN. Ah, Good, thou hast had long my hearty love;
I gave thee that which should be the Lord's above.
But wilt thou not go with me in deed?
I pray thee truth to say.
GOODS. No, so God me speed,
Therefore farewell, and have good day.
EVERYMAN. Oh, to whom shall I make my moan
For to go with me in that heavy journey?
First Fellowship said he would with me gone;
His words were very pleasant and gay,
But afterward he left me alone.
Then spake I to my kinsmen all in despair,
And also they gave me words fair,
They lacked no fair speaking,
But all forsake me in the ending.
Then went I to my Goods that I loved best,
In hope to have comfort, but there had I least;
For my Goods sharply did me tell
That he bringeth many into hell.
Then of myself I was ashamed,
And so I am worthy to be blamed;
Thus may I well myself hate.

[1] practice.
[2] shame, reproof.

Of whom shall I now counsel take?
I think that I shall never speed
Till that I go to my Good-Deed,
But alas, she is so weak,
That she can neither go nor speak;
Yet will I venture on her now.—
My Good-Deeds, where be you?

GOOD-DEEDS. Here I lie cold in the ground;
Thy sins hath me sore bound,
That I cannot stir.

EVERYMAN. Oh, Good-Deeds, I stand in fear;
I must you pray of counsel,
For help now should come right well.

GOOD-DEEDS. Everyman, I have understanding
That ye be summoned account to make
Before Messias, of Jerusalem King;
And you do by me[1] that journey with you will I take.

EVERYMAN. Therefore I come to you, my moan to make;
I pray you, that ye will go with me.

GOOD-DEEDS. I would full fain, but I cannot stand verily.

EVERYMAN. Why, is there anything on you fall?

GOOD-DEEDS. Yea, sir, I may thank you of all[2];
If ye had perfectly cheered[3] me,
Your book of account now full ready had be.
Look, the books of your works and deeds eke[4];
Oh, see how they lie under the feet,
To your soul's heaviness.

EVERYMAN. Our Lord Jesus, help me!
For one letter here I cannot see.

GOOD-DEEDS. There is a blind reckoning in time of distress!

EVERYMAN. Good-Deeds, I pray you, help me in this need,
Or else I am forever damned indeed;
Therefore help me to make reckoning

[1] if you take my counsel.
[2] for everything.
[3] cherished.
[4] also.

Before the redeemer of all things,
That king is, and was, and ever shall.
GOOD-DEEDS. Everyman, I am sorry of your fall,
And fain would I help you, and I were able.
EVERYMAN. Good-Deeds, your counsel I pray you give me.
GOOD-DEEDS. That shall I do verily;
Though that on my feet I may not go.
I have a sister, that shall with you also,
Called Knowledge, which shall with you abide,
To help you to make that dreadful reckoning.
KNOWLEDGE. Everyman, I will go with thee, and be thy guide,
In thy most need to go by thy side.
EVERYMAN. In good condition I am now in everything,
And am wholly content with this good thing;
Thanked be God my Creator.
GOOD-DEEDS. And when he hath brought thee there,
Where thou shalt heal thee of thy smart,
Then go you with your reckoning and your Good-Deeds together
For to make you joyful at heart
Before the blessed Trinity.
EVERYMAN. My Good-Deeds, gramercy;
I am well content, certainly,
With your words sweet.
KNOWLEDGE. Now go we together lovingly,
To Confession, that cleansing river.
EVERYMAN. For joy I weep; I would we were there;
But, I pray you give me cognition
Where dwelleth that holy man, Confession.
KNOWLEDGE. In the house of salvation:
We shall find him in that place,
That shall us comfort by God's grace.
Lo, this is Confession; kneel down and ask mercy,
For he is in good conceit[1] with God Almighty.

[1] favor.

EVERYMAN. O glorious fountain that all uncleanness doth clarify,
Wash from me the spots of vices unclean,
That on me no sin may be seen;
I come with Knowledge for my redemption,
Repent with hearty and full contrition;
For I am commanded a pilgrimage to take,
And great accounts before God to make.
Now, I pray you, Shrift,[1] mother of salvation,
Help my good deeds for my piteous exclamation.

CONFESSION. I know your sorrow well, Everyman;
Because with Knowledge ye come to me,
I will you comfort as well as I can,
And a precious jewel I will give thee,
Called penance, wise voider of adversity;
Therewith shall your body chastised be,
With abstinence and perseverance in God's service:
Here shall you receive that scourge of me
Which is penance strong, that ye must endure,
To remember thy Saviour was scourged for thee
With sharp scourges, and suffered it patiently;
So must thou, or thou scape that painful pilgrimage;
Knowledge, keep him in this voyage,
And by that time Good-Deeds will be with thee.
But in any wise, be sure of mercy,
For your time draweth fast, and ye will saved be;
Ask God mercy, and He will grant truly,
When with the scourge of penance man doth him bind,
The oil of forgiveness then shall he find.

EVERYMAN. Thanked be God for his gracious work!
For now I will my penance begin;
This hath rejoiced and lighted my heart,
Though the knots be painful and hard within.

KNOWLEDGE. Everyman, look your penance that ye fulfill,

[1] Confession to a priest, with absolution.

What pain that ever it to you be,
And Knowledge shall give you counsel at will,
How your accounts ye shall make clearly.

EVERYMAN. O eternal God, O heavenly figure,
O way of rightwiseness, O goodly vision,
Which descended down in a virgin pure
Because he would Everyman redeem,
Which Adam forfeited by his disobedience;
O blessed Godhead, elect and high-divine,
Forgive my grievous offense;
Here I cry thee mercy in this presence.
O ghostly treasure, O ransomer and redeemer
Of all the world, hope and conductor,
Mirror of joy, and founder of mercy,
Which illumineth heaven and earth thereby,
Hear my clamorous complaint, though it late be;
Receive my prayers; unworthy in this heavy life
Though I be, a sinner most abominable,
Yet let my name be written in Moses' table;
O Mary, pray to the Maker of all thing,
Me for to help at my ending,
And save me from the power of my enemy,
For Death assaileth me strongly;
And, Lady, that I may by means of thy prayer
Of your Son's glory to be partaker,
By the means of his passion I it crave,
I beseech you, help my soul to save.—
Knowledge, give me the scourge of penance;
My flesh therewith shall give a quittance:
I will now begin, if God give me grace.

KNOWLEDGE. Everyman, God give you time and space:
Thus I bequeath you in the hands of our Saviour,
Thus may you make your reckoning sure.

EVERYMAN. In the name of the Holy Trinity,
My body sore punished shall be:

Take this, body, for the sin of the flesh;
Also thou delightest to go gay and fresh,
And in the way of damnation thou did me bring;
Therefore suffer now strokes and punishing.
Now of penance I will wade the water clear
To save me from purgatory, that sharp fire.

GOOD-DEEDS. I thank God, now I can walk and go;
And am delivered of my sickness and woe.
Therefore with Everyman I will go, and not spare;
His good works I will help him to declare.

KNOWLEDGE. Now, Everyman, be merry and glad;
Your Good-Deeds cometh now; ye may not be sad;
Now is your Good-Deeds whole and sound,
Going upright upon the ground.

EVERYMAN. My heart is light, and shall be evermore;
Now will I smite faster than I did before.

GOOD-DEEDS. Everyman, pilgrim, my special friend,
Blessed be thou without end;
For thee is prepared the eternal glory.
Ye have me made whole and sound,
Therefore I will bide by thee in every stound.[1]

EVERYMAN. Welcome, my Good-Deeds; now I hear thy voice,
I weep for very sweetness of love.

KNOWLEDGE. Be no more sad, but ever rejoice,
God seeth thy living in his throne above;
Put on this garment to thy behove,[2]
Which is wet with your tears,
Or else before God you may it miss,
When you to your journey's end come shall.

EVERYMAN. Gentle Knowledge, what do you it call?

KNOWLEDGE. It is a garment of sorrow:
From pain it will you borrow[3];
Contrition it is,

[1] hour. [2] benefit. [3] redeem.

That getteth forgiveness;
It pleaseth God passing well.
GOOD-DEEDS. Everyman, will you wear it for your heal?
EVERYMAN. Now blessed be Jesu, Mary's Son!
For now have I on true contrition.
And let us go now without tarrying;
Good-Deeds, have we clear our reckoning?
GOOD-DEEDS. Yea, indeed I have it here.
EVERYMAN. Then I trust we need not fear;
Now, friends, let us not part in twain.
KNOWLEDGE. Nay, Everyman, that will we not, certain.
GOOD-DEEDS. Yet must thou lead with thee
Three persons of great might.
EVERYMAN. Who should they be?
GOOD-DEEDS. Discretion and Strength they hight,[1]
And thy Beauty may not abide behind.
KNOWLEDGE. Also ye must call to mind
Your Five-Wits as for your counselors.
GOOD-DEEDS. You must have them ready at all hours.
EVERYMAN. How shall I get them hither?
KNOWLEDGE. You must call them all together,
And they will hear you incontinent.[2]
EVERYMAN. My friends, come hither and be present
Discretion, Strength, my Five-Wits, and Beauty.
BEAUTY. Here at your will we be all ready.
What will ye that we should do?
GOOD-DEEDS. That ye would with Everyman go,
And help him in his pilgrimage,
Advise you, will ye with him or not in that voyage?
STRENGTH. We will bring him all thither,
To his help and comfort, ye may believe me.
DISCRETION. So will we go with him all together.
EVERYMAN. Almighty God, loved thou be,
I give thee laud that I have hither brought

[1] are called. [2] immediately.

Strength, Discretion, Beauty, and Five-Wits; lack I naught;
And my Good-Deeds, with Knowledge clear,
All be in my company at my will here;
I desire no more to my business.

STRENGTH. And I, Strength, will by you stand in distress,
Though thou would in battle fight on the ground.

FIVE-WITS. And though it were through the world round,
We will not depart for sweet nor sour.

BEAUTY. No more will I unto death's hour,
Whatsoever thereof befall.

DISCRETION. Everyman, advise you first of all;
Go with a good advisement and deliberation;
We all give you virtuous monition[1]
That all shall be well.

EVERYMAN. My friends, hearken what I will tell:
I pray God reward you in his heavenly sphere.
Now hearken, all that be here,
For I will make my testament
Here before you all present.
In alms half my good I will give with my hands twain
In the way of charity, with good intent,
And the other half still shall remain
In quethe[2] to be returned there it ought to be.
This I do in despite of the fiend of hell
To go quite out of his peril
Ever after and this day.

KNOWLEDGE. Everyman, hearken what I say;
Go to priesthood, I you advise,
And receive of him in any wise
The holy sacrament and ointment together;
Then shortly see ye turn again hither;
We will all abide you here.

FIVE-WITS. Yea, Everyman, hie you that ye ready were,

[1] admonition. [2] bequest.

There is no emperor, king, duke, nor baron,
That of God hath commission,
As hath the least priest in the world being[1];
For of the blessed sacraments pure and benign,
He beareth the keys and thereof hath the cure
For man's redemption, it is ever sure;
Which God for our soul's medicine
Gave us out of his heart with great pine[2];
Here in this transitory life, for thee and me
The blessed sacraments seven there be,
Baptism, confirmation, with priesthood good,
And the sacrament of God's precious flesh and blood,
Marriage, the holy extreme unction, and penance;
These seven be good to have in remembrance,
Gracious sacraments of high divinity.

EVERYMAN. Fain would I receive that holy body
And meekly to my ghostly father I will go.

FIVE-WITS. Everyman, that is the best that ye can do:
God will you to salvation bring,
For priesthood exceedeth all other thing;
To us Holy Scripture they do teach,
And converteth man from sin heaven to reach;
God hath to them more power given,
Than to any angel that is in heaven;
With five words he may consecrate
God's body in flesh and blood to make,
And handleth his maker between his hands;
The priest bindeth and unbindeth all bands,
Both in earth and in heaven;
Thou ministers all the sacraments seven;
Though we kissed thy feet thou were worthy;
Thou art surgeon that cureth sin deadly:
No remedy we find under God
But all only priesthood.

[1] living. [2] pain.

Everyman, God gave priests that dignity,
And setteth them in his stead among us to be;
Thus be they above angels in degree.

KNOWLEDGE. If priests be good it is so surely;
But when Jesus hanged on the cross with great smart
There he gave, out of his blessed heart,
The same sacrament in great torment:
He sold them not to us, that Lord Omnipotent.
Therefore Saint Peter the apostle doth say
That Jesu's curse hath all they
Which God their Saviour do buy or sell,
Or they for any money do take or tell.[1]
Sinful priests giveth the sinners example bad;
Their children sitteth by other men's fires, I have heard;
And some haunteth women's company,
With unclean life, as lusts of lechery:
These be with sin made blind.

FIVE-WITS. I trust to God no such may we find;
Therefore let us priesthood honor,
And follow their doctrine for our souls' succor;
We be their sheep, and they shepherds be
By whom we all be kept in surety.
Peace, for yonder I see Everyman come,
Which hath made true satisfaction.

GOOD-DEEDS. Methinketh it is he indeed.

EVERYMAN. Now Jesu be our alder speed.[2]
I have received the sacrament for my redemption,
And then mine extreme unction:
Blessed be all they that counseled me to take it!
And now, friends, let us go without longer respite;
I thank God that ye have tarried so long.
Now set each of you on this rod[3] your hand,
And shortly follow me:
I go before, there I would be; God be our guide.

[1] count. [2] the help of us all. [3] rood, cross.

STRENGTH. Everyman, we will not from you go,
Till ye have gone this voyage long.
DISCRETION. I, Discretion, will bide by you also.
KNOWLEDGE. And though this pilgrimage be never so strong,[1]
I will never part you fro:
Everyman, I will be as sure by thee
As ever I did by Judas Maccabee.[2]
EVERYMAN. Alas, I am so faint I may not stand,
My limbs under me do fold;
Friends, let us not turn again to this land,
Not for all the world's gold.
For into this cave must I creep
And turn to the earth and there to sleep.
BEAUTY. What, into this grave? alas!
EVERYMAN. Yea, there shall you consume more and less.
BEAUTY. And what, should I smother here?
EVERYMAN. Yea, by my faith, and never more appear.
In this world live no more we shall,
But in heaven before the highest Lord of all.
BEAUTY. I cross out all this; adieu by Saint John;
I take my tap in my lap and am gone.[3]
EVERYMAN. What, Beauty, whither will ye?
BEAUTY. Peace, I am deaf; I look not behind me,
Not and thou would give me all the gold in thy chest.
EVERYMAN. Alas, whereto may I trust?
Beauty goeth fast away;
She promised with me to live and die.
STRENGTH. Everyman, I will thee also forsake and deny;
Thy game liketh[4] me not at all.
EVERYMAN. Why, then ye will forsake me all.
Sweet Strength, tarry a little space.

[1] severe. [2] Jewish patriot of second century B. C.
[3] I hurry away. Used originally of a woman taking her flax (tap) and her distaff in going to or from a friend's house.
[4] pleaseth.

STRENGTH. Nay, sir, by the rood of grace[1]
I will hie me from thee fast,
Though thou weep till thy heart brast.[2]
EVERYMAN. Ye would ever bide by me, ye said.
STRENGTH. Yea, I have you far enough conveyed;
Ye be old enough, I understand,
Your pilgrimage to take on hand;
I repent me that I hither came.
EVERYMAN. Strength, you to displease I am to blame;
Will you break promise that is debt?
STRENGTH. In faith, I care not;
Thou art but a fool to complain,
You spend your speech and waste your brain;
Go thrust thee into the ground.
EVERYMAN. I had wend surer I should you have found.
He that trusteth in his Strength
She him deceiveth at the length.
Both Strength and Beauty forsaketh me,
Yet they promised me fair and lovingly.
DISCRETION. Everyman, I will after Strength be gone,
As for me I will leave you alone.
EVERYMAN. Why, Discretion, will ye forsake me?
DISCRETION. Yea, in faith, I will go from thee,
For when Strength goeth before
I follow after evermore.
EVERYMAN. Yet, I pray thee, for the love of the Trinity,
Look in my grave once piteously.
DISCRETION. Nay, so nigh will I not come.
Farewell, everyone!
EVERYMAN. O all thing faileth, save God alone;
Beauty, Strength, and Discretion;
For when Death bloweth his blast,
They all run from me full fast.

[1] Christ's cross.
[2] burst.

FIVE-WITS. Everyman, my leave now of thee I take;
I will follow the other, for here I thee forsake.
EVERYMAN. Alas! then may I wail and weep,
For I took you for my best friend.
FIVE-WITS. I will no longer thee keep;
Now farewell, and there an end.
EVERYMAN. O Jesu, help, all hath forsaken me!
GOOD-DEEDS. Nay, Everyman, I will bide with thee,
I will not forsake thee indeed;
Thou shalt find me a good friend at need.
EVERYMAN. Gramercy, Good-Deeds; now may I true friends see;
They have forsaken me every one;
I loved them better than my Good-Deeds alone.
Knowledge, will ye forsake me also?
KNOWLEDGE. Yea, Everyman, when ye to death do go:
But not yet for no manner of danger.
EVERYMAN. Gramercy, Knowledge, with all my heart.
KNOWLEDGE. Nay, yet I will not from hence depart,
Till I see where ye shall be come.
EVERYMAN. Methinketh, alas, that I must be gone,
To make my reckoning and my debts pay,
For I see my time is nigh spent away.
Take example, all ye that this do hear or see,
How they that I loved best do forsake me,
Except my Good-Deeds that bideth truly.
GOOD-DEEDS. All earthly things is but vanity:
Beauty, Strength, and Discretion, do man forsake,
Foolish friends and kinsmen, that fair spake.
All fleeth save Good-Deeds, and that am I.
EVERYMAN. Have mercy on me, God most mighty;
And stand by me, thou Mother and Maid, holy Mary.
GOOD-DEEDS. Fear not, I will speak for thee.
EVERYMAN. Here I cry God mercy.
GOOD-DEEDS. Short our end, and minish our pain;
Let us go and never come again.

EVERYMAN. Into thy hands, Lord, my soul I commend;
Receive it, Lord, that it be not lost;
As thou me boughtest, so me defend,
And save me from the fiend's boast,
That I may appear with that blessed host
That shall be saved at the day of doom.
In manus tuas — of might's most
Forever — *commendo spiritum meum.*[1]

KNOWLEDGE. Now hath he suffered that we all shall endure;
The Good-Deeds shall make all sure.
Now hath he made ending;
Methinketh that I hear angels sing
And make great joy and melody,
Where Everyman's soul received shall be.

ANGEL. Come, excellent elect spouse to Jesu:
Hereabove thou shalt go
Because of thy singular virtue:
Now the soul is taken the body fro;
Thy reckoning is crystal-clear.
Now shalt thou into the heavenly sphere,
Unto the which all ye shall come
That liveth well before the day of doom.

DOCTOR. This moral men may have in mind;
Ye hearers, take it of worth, old and young,
And forsake pride, for he deceiveth you in the end,
And remember Beauty, Five-Wits, Strength, and Discretion,
They all at the last do Everyman forsake,
Save his Good-Deeds, there doth he take.
But beware, and they be small
Before God, he hath no help at all.
None excuse may be there for Everyman:
Alas, how shall he do then?
For after death amends may no man make,
For then mercy and pity do him forsake.

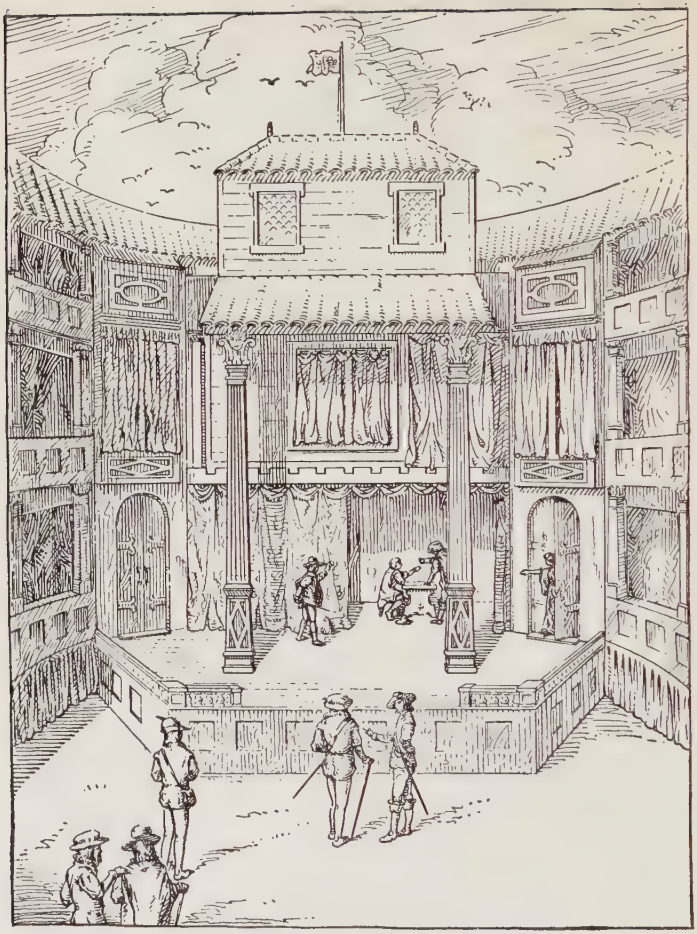
[1] See first line of this speech.

If his reckoning be not clear when he do come,
God will say — *ite maledicti in ignem aeternum.*[1]
And he that hath his account whole and sound,
High in heaven he shall be crowned;
Unto which place God bring us all thither
That we may live body and soul together.
Thereto help the Trinity,
Amen, say ye, for saint charity.

FINIS

THUS ENDETH THIS MORAL PLAY OF EVERYMAN

[1] Hence, accursed one, into eternal fire.



A TYPICAL ELIZABETHAN STAGE

Some scholars believe that the stage was square, not tapering

ELIZABETHAN TRAGEDY

THE TRAGICAL HISTORY OF DOCTOR FAUSTUS, BY CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE (1564–1593)

In the century before Marlowe the development toward tragedy was very gradual; there had been only the pathos of some miracle plays, the intense ethical teaching of the better moralities, the cold rhetoric of Senecan imitations (such as "Gorboduc," 1561), and the disconnected episodes of the early history plays. Between 1587 and 1593 Marlowe, a young man in his twenties, created Elizabethan tragedy. He did not excel in character portrayal; his skill in plot-making was singularly uneven; he had no real sense of humor; and he cared little for love or other social relationships. But he gave to English drama poetry so splendid that it made up for the lack of dramatic construction; passion so intense that it gave unity to each play; and heroes so exalted by imagination that the weak minor characters became unimportant. In most of his plays, as in "Tamburlaine" (1587), "Doctor Faustus" (1588), and "The Jew of Malta" (1589), his heroes are endowed with the Renaissance intensity of desires, confidence in self, and skepticism of moral law.

Elizabethan tragedy was based on *individual will.* Greek tragedy represented man as struggling vainly against *fate.* Modern tragedy usually shows the central figure as powerless against *environment or heredity* — defeated by economic obstacles, by family ties, or by inborn qualities of mind or body. Elizabethan tragedy was personal, not fatalistic or sociological; a man failed through his own strength or weakness — through an evil choice or through conflict with his own nature. In

"Julius Cæsar" the wily Cassius was not uttering a strange doctrine for Elizabethan hearers when he said,

> "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
> But in ourselves, that we are underlings."

Modern drama excels in problem and social plays; but its infrequent tragedies are less satisfactory, with such exceptions as Masefield's masterpiece, "The Tragedy of Nan." Modern drama offers prose realism instead of poetic idealism, local color instead of the universal. There is more likely to be pathos than real tragedy; we can only feel sorry for the helpless central character, caught in the meshes of circumstance, who sinks

> "Beneath the bludgeonings of chance."

In the greatest tragedy the hero does not altogether fail. He arouses sympathy in the spectators, so that we feel pity as well as terror. He is often more triumphant in death than in life, and through him human nature seems to be victorious in defeat. He becomes a typical figure, representing the aspirations as well as the failures of mankind. As Masefield has said,

> Tragedy at its best is a vision of the heart of life. The heart of life can only be laid bare in the agony and exultation of dreadful acts. The vision of agony, of spiritual contest, pushed beyond the limits of dying personality, is exalting and cleansing. It is only by such vision that a multitude can be brought to the passionate knowledge of things exalting and eternal.

Marlowe, although the son of a shoemaker, was aided by scholarships to attend the King's School in his native Canterbury and to proceed to Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, where he received the B.A. degree in 1584 and the M.A. in 1587. Near this time he became attached to one of the leading theatrical companies of the age, the Lord Admiral's men, by whom most of his plays were presented (with the gigantic Edward Alleyn in the leading rôles).

About Marlowe's life there has been far more legend and guesswork than record; but he seems to have led a dual life, as a brilliant wit in a group of young intellectuals and as a secret government agent. He was attached to the powerful Walsingham family, and perhaps saw service abroad as a spy. On May 30, 1593, while in company with two other dependents of the Walsinghams and a follower of the Earl of Essex at a tavern in Deptford (on the Thames southeast of London), Marlowe was stabbed to death. Marlowe's three companions swore before the coroner's jury that one of their number, Frizer, had killed Marlowe in self-defense, after quarreling with him about paying the tavern bill. Marlowe was buried on the day of the inquest, on the second day after his death; the court showed unusual interest in the case; and the Queen speedily pardoned Frizer, who remained for some time afterwards in the service of the Walsinghams.

Hotson, the investigator who uncovered the record of Marlowe's death, has suggested that the payment of the tavern reckoning was itself a sufficient cause for a real quarrel; but the personal character of the three survivors and their unanimous testimony against Marlowe may suggest something more. If Marlowe was put out of the way by the connivance of the government or of the influential Walsingham family, it would be clear why no report of his death became circulated except in the garbled legends that have prevailed until recently. A recent book by Tannenbaum points out the absurdities in the coroner's report of Marlowe's death, and attempts to prove that Sir Walter Raleigh was responsible for the plot.

Shakespeare, who learned more from Marlowe than from any other dramatist, referred kindly to him, perhaps six years later, when he had Phebe quote from Marlowe's poem "Hero and Leander" ("As You Like It," III, v, 81–82):

> "Dead shepherd, now I find thy saw of might,
> 'Who ever loved that loved not at first sight?'"

"Doctor Faustus" was written about 1588, and was based on the German "Faustbuch" of 1587, which Marlowe had probably read in an English translation. The stories of the magician Faust were about a century old, and the legends of a man who had sold himself to the devil date back to the early Middle Ages. The first quarto of 1604 is the source of all good modern texts, as later quartos show many inferior alterations; but even by 1604 the play had been tampered with by the actors. It is certain that additional scenes were added from time to time; for example, the reference to Dr. Lopez in this text must have been inserted at least a year after Marlowe's death. The comic scenes are of especially questionable character, and many editors regard them as not by Marlowe. However, the introduction of some comic scenes was a common feature of Elizabethan tragedies, and it is clear that Marlowe was not like Shakespeare in possessing a genius for humor.

The frequent use of Latin in the play is due to three circumstances: (1) Dr. Faustus was a scholar, and his favorite quotations are from classical authors and from the scholastic logicians of the Middle Ages. (2) The burlesque of the friars at Rome and their attempt to quiet the unseen spirits naturally introduces an imitation of priestly Latin. (3) It was believed that spirits could be summoned only in Latin, the language of the learned. For this reason Horatio is asked to speak to the ghost of Hamlet's father ("Hamlet," I, i, 42):

"Thou art a scholar; speak to it, Horatio."

"Doctor Faustus" resembles the moralities in the struggle of the virtuous advisers (the Good Angel, the Old Man, and the Scholars) against the influences for evil (Mephistophilis, the Evil Angel, and the Devils) for the soul of the hero. The play is not divided into acts, but into loosely connected scenes, much as in the miracles and earlier history plays. Most of the important dialogue is written in blank verse, which had been used only occasionally before Marlowe's time. Marlowe's blank

verse is not wooden like that of its earliest writer, Surrey, nor sweetly melodious like that of Peele; instead, it is as swift and passionate as the thought uttered by the characters. It is difficult to imagine Marlowe's plays in any other verse; from them Shakespeare learned the use of dramatic verse, and with some increase of ease and flexibility Marlowe's verse has been the standard for English poetic tragedy, as for much other English poetry.

Whereas the early writers of blank verse had tried to imitate classical verse, Marlowe recognized that it was an English measure; and he based his "mighty line" directly upon the sound of English words. He was especially fond of musical proper names and of words with distinctly accented rhythms. In his verse there are five feet to a line, but the reader does not count accents or syllables; he cannot go astray if he will but read the verse as it is intended:

"I'll burn my books! — Ah, Méphistóphilis!"

Shakespeare, portraying all human moods and characters, desired more variety, and he experimented with modifications of blank verse and with passages of rimed verse and of prose; but the stiffer verse of Marlowe afforded a perfect means of expression for force and passion.

"Doctor Faustus" held the stage in England for many years. Its influence on the Continent lasted much longer. The principal drama which makes use of the story is Goethe's "Faust," upon which the operas of Gounod, Boïto, and Berlioz have been based.

Many features of Elizabethan tragedy are better represented by Shakespeare than by Marlowe, such as the revenge plot, the effective use of comic relief, and the analysis of contrasting characters ("Hamlet"); the tale of thwarted love ("Romeo and Juliet") or of loyal friendship ("The Merchant of Venice"); and the use of two parallel stories ("King Lear") or of a closely unified plot ("Othello"). But "Doctor Faustus" is one of the first and most characteristic of Elizabethan tragedies, as it was one of the most popular of all.

The Tragicall Hiſtorie of the Life and Death of Doctor Fauſtus.

With new Additions.

Written by C H. MAR.

Printed at London for *John Wright*, and are to be ſold at his ſhop without Newgate. 1631.

EDWARD ALLEYN AS DOCTOR FAUSTUS

THE TRAGICAL HISTORY OF DOCTOR FAUSTUS

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

THE POPE
CARDINAL OF LORRAIN
THE EMPEROR OF GERMANY
DUKE OF VANHOLT
FAUSTUS
VALDES, CORNELIUS } *friends to* FAUSTUS
WAGNER, *servant to* FAUSTUS
CLOWN
ROBIN
RALPH
VINTNER
HORSE-COURSER
A KNIGHT
AN OLD MAN
DUCHESS OF VANHOLT
LUCIFER
BELZEBUB
MEPHISTOPHILIS
GOOD ANGEL
EVIL ANGEL
THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS
DEVILS
SPIRITS *in the shapes of* ALEXANDER THE GREAT, *of his* PARAMOUR, *and of* HELEN
CHORUS

Scholars, Friars, *and* Attendants

[*Enter* CHORUS.]

CHORUS. Not marching now in fields of Thrasymene,
Where Mars did mate[1] the Carthaginians;
Nor sporting in the dalliance of love,
In courts of kings where state is overturned;
Nor in the pomp of proud audacious deeds,
Intends our Muse to vaunt her heavenly verse:
Only this, gentlemen,— we must perform
The form of Faustus' fortunes, good or bad:

[1] confound. (*But Hannibal was victorious at Lake Trasumenus.*)

To patient judgments we appeal our plaud,[1]
And speak for Faustus in his infancy.
Now is he born, his parents base of stock,
In Germany, within a town called Rhodes[2]:
Of riper years, to Wertenberg[3] he went,
Whereas his kinsmen chiefly brought him up.
So soon he profits in divinity,
The fruitful plot of scholarism graced,
That shortly he was graced with doctor's name,
Excelling all whose sweet delight disputes
In heavenly matters of theology;
Till swol'n with cunning, of a self-conceit,
His waxen wings[4] did mount above his reach,
And, melting, heavens conspired his overthrow;
For, falling to a devilish exercise,
And glutted [now] with learning's golden gifts,
He surfeits upon cursèd necromancy;
Nothing so sweet as magic is to him,
Which he prefers before his chiefest bliss:
And this the man that in his study sits. [*Exit.*]

[FAUSTUS *discovered in his study.*]

FAUSTUS. Settle thy studies, Faustus, and begin
To sound the depth of that thou wilt profess:[5]
Having commenced, be a divine in show,
Yet level[6] at the end of every art,
And live and die in Aristotle's works.
Sweet Analytics,[7] 'tis thou hast ravished me!
Bene disserere est finis logices.[8]
Is to dispute well logic's chiefest end?
Affords this art no greater miracle?

[1] for applause. [2] Roda, near Jena, in Germany.
[3] Wittenberg, German university town.
[4] Allusion to Greek myth of Icarus, who flew too near the sun.
[5] teach. [6] aim. [7] logic. [8] 'To argue well is the end of logic

Then read no more; thou hast attained that end:
A greater subject fitteth Faustus' wit:
Bid ὄν και μὴ ὄν[1] farewell; Galen come,
Seeing, *Ubi desinit philosophus, ibi incipit medicus:*[2]
Be a physician, Faustus; heap up gold,
And be eternized for some wondrous cure:
Summum bonum medicinae sanitas,[3]
The end of physic is our body's health.
Why, Faustus, hast thou not attained that end?
Is not thy common talk sound aphorisms[4]?
Are not thy bills[5] hung up as monuments,
Whereby whole cities have escaped the plague,
And thousand desperate maladies been eased?
Yet art thou still but Faustus, and a man.
Couldst thou make men to live eternally,
Or, being dead, raise them to life again,
Then this profession were to be esteemed.
Physic, farewell! Where is Justinian? [*Reads.*]
Si una eademque res legatur duobus, alter rem, alter valorem rei, etc.[6]
A pretty case of paltry legacies! [*Reads.*]
Exhaereditare filium non potest pater, nisi, etc.[7]
Such is the subject of the institute,[8]
And universal body of the law:
This study fits a mercenary drudge,
Who aims at nothing but external trash;
Too servile and illiberal for me.
When all is done, divinity is best:

[1] being and not being (*a phrase from Aristotle*).
[2] Where the philosopher leaves off, the physician begins.
[3] Translated in the following line, like several subsequent Latin passages.
[4] medical maxims. [5] announcements.
[6] If one and the same thing is willed to two persons, one receives the thing, the other the value of the thing, etc.
[7] A father cannot disinherit his own son, unless, etc.
[8] Justinian's code of the Roman law.

Jerome's Bible,[1] Faustus, view it well. [*Reads.*]
Stipendium peccati mors est. Ha! *Stipendium, etc.*
The reward of sin is death: that's hard. [*Reads.*]
Si peccasse negamus, fallimur, et nulla est in nobis veritas;
If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and there's no truth in us. Why, then, belike we must sin, and so consequently die:
Aye, we must die an everlasting death.
What doctrine call you this, *Che sera, sera,*
What will be, shall be? Divinity, adieu!
These metaphysics of magicians,
And necromantic books are heavenly;
Lines, circles, scenes, letters, and characters;
Aye, these are those that Faustus most desires.
Oh, what a world of profit and delight,
Of power, of honor, of omnipotence,
Is promised to the studious artisan!
All things that move between the quiet poles
Shall be at my command: emperors and kings
Are but obeyed in their several provinces,
Nor can they raise the wind, or rend the clouds;
But his dominion that exceeds in this,
Stretcheth as far as doth the mind of man;
A sound magician is a mighty god:
Here, Faustus, try thy brains to gain a deity.

[*Enter* WAGNER.]

Wagner, commend me to my dearest friends,
The German Valdes and Cornelius;
Request them earnestly to visit me.

WAGNER. I will, sir. [*Exit.*]

FAUSTUS. Their conference will be a greater help to me
Than all my labors, plod I ne'er so fast.

[1] The Vulgate, or Latin Bible.

[*Enter* Good Angel *and* Evil Angel.]

Good Angel. Oh, Faustus, lay thy damnèd book aside,
And gaze not on it, lest it tempt thy soul,
And heap God's heavy wrath upon thy head!
Read, read the Scriptures:— that is blasphemy.

Evil Angel. Go forward, Faustus, in that famous art
Wherein all Nature's treasure is contained:
Be thou on earth as Jove is in the sky,
Lord and commander of these elements.

[*Exeunt* Angels.]

Faustus. How am I glutted with conceit of this!
Shall I make spirits fetch me what I please,
Resolve me of all ambiguities,
Perform what desperate enterprise I will?
I'll have them fly to India for gold,
Ransack the ocean for orient pearl,
And search all corners of the new-found world
For pleasant fruits and princely delicates;
I'll have them read me strange philosophy,
And tell the secrets of all foreign kings;
I'll have them wall all Germany with brass,
And make swift Rhine circle fair Wertenberg;
I'll have them fill the public schools with silk,
Wherewith the students shall be bravely clad;
I'll levy soldiers with the coin they bring,
And chase the Prince of Parma from our land,[1]
And reign sole king of all the provinces;
Yea, stranger engines for the brunt of war,
Than was the fiery keel at Antwerp's bridge,[2]
I'll make my servile spirits to invent.

[1] The Netherlands, in which Parma had reëstablished Spanish rule.

[2] A ship filled with explosives used to destroy a bridge used by Spaniards in the siege of Antwerp, 1585.

[*Enter* VALDES *and* CORNELIUS.[1]]

Come, German Valdes and Cornelius,
And make me blest with your sage conference.
Valdes, sweet Valdes, and Cornelius,
Know that your words have won me at the last
To practice magic and concealèd arts:
Yet not your words only, but mine own fantasy,
That will receive no object; for my head
But ruminates on necromantic skill.
Philosophy is odious and obscure;
Both law and physic are for petty wits;
Divinity is basest of the three,
Unpleasant, harsh, contemptible, and vile:
'Tis magic, magic, that hath ravished me.
Then, gentle friends, aid me in this attempt;
And I, that have with concise syllogisms
Graveled[2] the pastors of the German church,
And made the flowering pride of Wertenberg
Swarm to my problems, as the infernal spirits
On sweet Musæus[3] when he came to hell,
Will be as cunning as Agrippa was,
Whose shadow made all Europe honor him.

VALDES. Faustus, these books, thy wit, and our experience,
Shall make all nations to canonize us.
As Indian Moors[4] obey their Spanish lords,
So shall the subjects of every element
Be always serviceable to us three;
Like lions shall they guard us when we please;
Like Almain rutters[5] with their horsemen's staves,
Or Lapland giants, trotting by our sides;
Sometimes like women, or unwedded maids,
Shadowing more beauty in their airy brows

[1] Cornelius Agrippa, famous professor of magic; Valdes not known.
[2] embarrassed. [3] Virgil's Æneid, VI, 667. [4] American Indians.
[5] German troopers.

Than have the white breasts of the queen of love:
From Venice shall they drag huge argosies,
And from America the golden fleece
That yearly stuffs old Philip's treasury;
If learnèd Faustus will be resolute.

FAUSTUS. Valdes, as resolute am I in this
As thou to live: therefore object it not.

CORNELIUS. The miracles that magic will perform
Will make thee vow to study nothing else.
He that is grounded in astrology,
Enriched with tongues, well seen[1] in minerals,
Hath all the principles magic doth require:
Then doubt not, Faustus, but to be renowned,
And more frequented for this mystery
Than heretofore the Delphian oracle.
The spirits tell me they can dry the sea,
And fetch the treasure of all foreign wrecks,
Aye, all the wealth that our forefathers hid
Within the massy entrails of the earth:
Then tell me, Faustus, what shall we three want?

FAUSTUS. Nothing, Cornelius. Oh, this cheers my soul!
Come, show me some demonstrations magical,
That I may conjure in some lusty grove,
And have these joys in full possession.

VALDES. Then haste thee to some solitary grove,
And bear wise Bacon's[2] and Albertus'[3] works,
The Hebrew Psalter, and New Testament;
And whatsoever else is requisite
We will inform thee ere our conference cease.

CORNELIUS. Valdes, first let him know the words of art;
And then, all other ceremonies learned,
Faustus may try his cunning by himself.

[1] versed, skilled.
[2] Roger Bacon, English monk and scientist.
[3] Albertus Magnus, medieval philosopher.

VALDES. First I'll instruct thee in the rudiments,
And then wilt thou be perfecter than I.

FAUSTUS. Then come and dine with me, and, after meat,
We'll canvass every quiddity[1] thereof;
For, ere I sleep, I'll try what I can do:
This night I'll conjure, though I die therefore. [*Exeunt.*]

[*Enter two* Scholars.]

FIRST SCHOLAR. I wonder what's become of Faustus, that was wont to make our schools ring with *sic probo*.[2]

SECOND SCHOLAR. That shall we know, for see, here comes his boy.

[*Enter* WAGNER.]

FIRST SCHOLAR. How now, sirrah! where's thy master?

WAGNER. God in heaven knows.

SECOND SCHOLAR. Why, dost not thou know?

WAGNER. Yes, I know; but that follows not.

FIRST SCHOLAR. Go to, sirrah! leave your jesting, and tell us where he is.

WAGNER. That follows not necessary by force of argument, that you, being licentiates, should stand upon; therefore acknowledge your error, and be attentive.

SECOND SCHOLAR. Why, didst thou not say thou knewest?

WAGNER. Have you any witness on't?

FIRST SCHOLAR. Yes, sirrah, I heard you.

WAGNER. Ask my fellow if I be a thief.

SECOND SCHOLAR. Well, you will not tell us?

WAGNER. Yes, sir, I will tell you; yet, if you were not dunces, you would never ask me such a question, for is not he *corpus naturale*?[3] and is not that *mobile*?[4] then wherefore should you ask me such a question? But that I am by nature phlegmatic, slow to wrath, and prone to lechery (to love, I would say), it were not for you to come within forty foot of the place of execution, although I do not doubt to see you both hanged the next

[1] fine point. [2] thus I prove. [3] natural body. [4] movable.

sessions. Thus having triumphed over you, I will set my countenance like a precisian,[1] and begin to speak thus: — Truly, my dear brethren, my master is within at dinner, with Valdes and Cornelius, as this wine, if it could speak, would inform your worships: and so, the Lord bless you, preserve you, and keep you, my dear brethren, my dear brethren! [*Exit.*]

First Scholar. Nay, then, I fear he has fallen into that damned art for which they two are infamous through the world.

Second Scholar. Were he a stranger, and not allied to me, yet should I grieve for him. But, come, let us go and inform the Rector, and see if he by his grave counsel can reclaim him.

First Scholar. Oh, but I fear me nothing can reclaim him!

Second Scholar. Yet let us try what we can do. [*Exeunt.*]

[*Enter* Faustus *to conjure.*]

Faustus. Now that the gloomy shadow of the earth,
Longing to view Orion's drizzling look,
Leaps from th'antarctic world unto the sky,
And dims the welkin with her pitchy breath,
Faustus, begin thine incantations,
And try if devils will obey thy hest,
Seeing thou hast prayed and sacrificed to them.
Within this circle is Jehovah's name,
Forward and backward anagrammatized,
Th'abbreviated names of holy saints,
Figures of every adjunct[2] to the heavens,
And characters of signs and erring stars,[3]
By which the spirits are enforced to rise:
Then fear not, Faustus, but be resolute,
And try the uttermost magic can perform.—

Sint mihi dei Acherontis propitii! Valeat numen triplex Jehovae! Ignei, aërii, aquatani spiritus, salvete! Orientis princeps Belzebub, inferni ardentis monarcha, et Demogorgon, pro-

[1] a Puritan (*often satirized in Elizabethan drama*).
[2] every star belonging to. [3] planets.

pitiamus vos, ut appareat et surgat Mephistophilis; quid tu moraris? Per Jehovam, Gehennam, et consecratam aquam quam nunc spargo, signumque crucis quod nunc facio, et per vota nostra, ipse nunc surgat nobis dicatus Mephistophilis![1]

[*Enter* MEPHISTOPHILIS.]

I charge thee to return, and change thy shape;
Thou art too ugly to attend on me:
Go, and return an old Franciscan friar;
That holy shape becomes a devil best.

[*Exit* MEPHISTOPHILIS.]

I see there's virtue in my heavenly words:
Who would not be proficient in this art?
How pliant is this Mephistophilis,
Full of obedience and humility!
Such is the force of magic and my spells:
Now, Faustus, thou art conjurer laureate,
That canst command great Mephistophilis:
Quin regis Mephistophilis fratris imagine.[2]

[*Reënter* MEPHISTOPHILIS *like a Franciscan friar.*]

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Now, Faustus, what wouldst thou have me do?

FAUSTUS. I charge thee wait upon me whilst I live,
To do whatever Faustus shall command,
Be it to make the moon drop from her sphere,
Or the ocean to overwhelm the world.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. I am a servant to great Lucifer,
And may not follow thee without his leave:
No more than he commands must we perform.

[1] Gods of the Lower World, be propitious to me! May the triple deity of Jehovah prevail! Spirits of fire, air, water, hail! Belzebub, Prince of the East, monarch of burning hell, and Demogorgon, we propitiate ye, that Mephistophilis may appear and rise; why dost thou delay? By Jehovah, Gehenna, and the holy water which now I sprinkle, and the sign of the cross which now I make, and by our prayer, may Mephistophilis now called by us arise!

[2] Indeed thou hast power in the image of thy brother Mephistophilis.

FAUSTUS. Did not he charge thee to appear to me?
MEPHISTOPHILIS. No, I came hither of mine own accord.
FAUSTUS. Did not my conjuring speeches raise thee? speak.
MEPHISTOPHILIS. That was the cause, but yet *per accidens*[1]:
For, when we hear one rack the name of God,
Abjure the Scriptures and his Saviour Christ,
We fly, in hope, to get his glorious soul;
Nor will we come, unless he use such means
Whereby he is in danger to be damned.
Therefore the shortest cut for conjuring
Is stoutly to adjure the Trinity,
And pray devoutly to the prince of hell.
FAUSTUS. So Faustus hath
Already done; and holds this principle,
There is no chief but only Belzebub;
To whom Faustus doth dedicate himself.
This word "damnation" terrifies not him,
For he confounds hell in Elysium:[2]
His ghost be with the old philosophers!
But, leaving these vain trifles of men's souls,
Tell me what is that Lucifer thy lord?
MEPHISTOPHILIS. Arch-regent and commander of all spirits.
FAUSTUS. Was not that Lucifer an angel once?
MEPHISTOPHILIS. Yes, Faustus, and most dearly loved of God.
FAUSTUS. How comes it, then, that he is prince of devils?
MEPHISTOPHILIS. Oh, by aspiring pride and insolence;
For which God threw him from the face of heaven.
FAUSTUS. And what are you that live with Lucifer?
MEPHISTOPHILIS. Unhappy spirits that fell with Lucifer,
Conspired against our God with Lucifer,
And are forever damned with Lucifer.
FAUSTUS. Where are you damned?
MEPHISTOPHILIS. In hell.

[1] by accident. [2] hell and heaven are alike to him.

FAUSTUS. How come it, then, that thou art out of hell?
MEPHISTOPHILIS. Why, this is hell, nor am I out of it.
Think'st thou that I, who saw the face of God,
And tasted the eternal joys of heaven,
Am not tormented with ten thousand hells,
In being deprived of everlasting bliss?
Oh, Faustus, leave these frivolous demands,
Which strike a terror to my fainting soul!
FAUSTUS. What, is great Mephistophilis so passionate
For being deprivèd of the joys of heaven?
Learn thou of Faustus manly fortitude,
And scorn those joys thou never shalt possess.
Go bear these tidings to great Lucifer:
Seeing Faustus hath incurred eternal death
By desperate thoughts against Jove's deity,
Say, he surrenders up to him his soul,
So he will spare him four-and-twenty years,
Letting him live in all voluptuousness;
Having thee ever to attend on me,
To give me whatsoever I shall ask,
To tell me whatsoever I demand,
To slay mine enemies, and aid my friends,
And always be obedient to my will.
Go and return to mighty Lucifer,
And meet me in my study at midnight,
And then resolve[1] me of thy master's mind.
MEPHISTOPHILIS. I will, Faustus. [*Exit.*]
FAUSTUS. Had I as many souls as there be stars,
I'd give them all for Mephistophilis.
By him I'll be great emperor of the world,
And make a bridge thorough the moving air,
To pass the ocean with a band of men;
I'll join the hills that bind the Afric shore,
And make that country continent to Spain,

[1] inform.

And both contributory to my crown:
The Emperor shall not live but by my leave,
Nor any potentate of Germany.
Now that I have obtained what I desired,
I'll live in speculation[1] of this art,
Till Mephistophilis return again. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter* WAGNER *and* CLOWN.]

WAGNER. Sirrah boy, come hither.

CLOWN. How, boy! swowns, boy! I hope you have seen many boys with such pickadevaunts[2] as I have: boy, quotha!

WAGNER. Tell me, sirrah, hast thou any comings in?

CLOWN. Aye, and goings out too; you may see else.

WAGNER. Alas, poor slave! see how poverty jesteth in his nakedness! the villain is bare and out of service, and so hungry that I know he would give his soul to the devil for a shoulder of mutton, though it were blood-raw.

CLOWN. How! my soul to the devil for a shoulder of mutton, though 'twere blood-raw! not so, good friend: by'r lady, I had need have it well roasted, and good sauce to it, if I pay so dear.

WAGNER. Well, wilt thou serve me, and I'll make thee go like *Qui mihi discipulus?*[3]

CLOWN. How, in verse?

WAGNER. No, sirrah; in beaten silk and staves-acre.[4]

CLOWN. How, how, knaves-acre[5]! aye, I thought that was all the land his father left him. Do you hear? I would be sorry to rob you of your living.

WAGNER. Sirrah, I say in staves-acre.

CLOWN. Oho, oho, staves-acre! why, then, belike, if I were your man I should be full of vermin.

WAGNER. So thou shalt, whether thou beest with me or no. But, sirrah, leave your jesting, and bind yourself presently

[1] study. [2] beards trimmed to a sharp point. [3] Who will be my pupil?
[4] Species of larkspur, used for destroying lice. [5] A mean street in London.

unto me for seven years, or I'll turn all the lice about thee into familiars, and they shall tear thee in pieces.

CLOWN. Do you hear, sir? you may save that labor; they are too familiar with me already: swowns, they are as bold with my flesh as if they had paid for their meat and drink.

WAGNER. Well, do you hear, sirrah? hold, take these guilders. [*Gives money.*]

CLOWN. Gridirons! what be they?

WAGNER. Why, French crowns.

CLOWN. Mass, but for the name of French crowns, a man were as good have as many English counters. And what should I do with these?

WAGNER. Why, now, sirrah, thou art at an hour's warning, whensoever and wheresoever the devil shall fetch thee.

CLOWN. No, no; here, take your gridirons again.

WAGNER. Truly, I'll none of them.

CLOWN. Truly, but you shall.

WAGNER. Bear witness I gave them him.

CLOWN. Bear witness I give them you again.

WAGNER. Well, I will cause two devils presently to fetch thee away — Baliol and Belcher!

CLOWN. Let your Baliol and your Belcher come here, and I'll knock them, they were never so knocked since they were devils: say I should kill one of them, what would folks say? "Do ye see yonder tall fellow in the round slop?[1] he has killed the devil." So I should be called Kill-devil all the parish over.

[*Enter two* Devils; *and the* CLOWN *runs up and down crying.*]

WAGNER. Baliol and Belcher,— spirits, away! [*Exeunt* Devils.]

CLOWN. What, are they gone? a vengeance on them! they have vile long nails. There was a he-devil and a she-devil: I'll tell you how you shall know them; all he-devils has horns, and all she-devils has clifts and cloven feet.

WAGNER. Well, sirrah, follow me.

[1] short, wide breeches.

CLOWN. But, do you hear? if I should serve you, would you teach me to raise up Banios and Belcheos?

WAGNER. I will teach thee to turn thyself to anything, to a dog, or a cat, or a mouse, or a rat, or anything.

CLOWN. How! a Christian fellow to a dog, or a cat, a mouse, or a rat! no, no, sir; if you turn me into anything, let it be in the likeness of a little pretty frisking flea, that I may be here and there and everywhere: oh, I'll tickle the pretty wenches' plackets! I'll be amongst them, i'faith.

WAGNER. Well, sirrah, come.

CLOWN. But, do you hear, Wagner?

WAGNER. How!—Baliol and Belcher!

CLOWN. O Lord! I pray, sir, let Baliol and Belcher go sleep.

WAGNER. Villain, call me Master Wagner, and let thy left eye be diametarily[1] fixed upon my right heel, with *quasi vestigiis nostris insistere.*[2] [*Exit.*]

CLOWN. God forgive me, he speaks Dutch fustian. Well, I'll follow him; I'll serve him, that's flat. [*Exit.*]

[FAUSTUS *discovered in his study.*]

FAUSTUS. Now, Faustus, must
Thou needs be damned, and canst thou not be saved:
What boots it, then, to think of God or heaven?
Away with such vain fancies, and despair;
Despair in God, and trust in Belzebub:
Now go not backward; no, Faustus, be resolute:
Why waver'st thou? O, something soundeth in mine ears,
"Abjure this magic, turn to God again!"
Aye, and Faustus will turn to God again.
To God? he loves thee not;
The god thou serv'st is thine own appetite,
Wherein is fixed the love of Belzebub:
To him I'll build an altar and a church,
And offer lukewarm blood of new-born babes.

[1] diametrically. [2] as if to follow in my footsteps.

[*Enter* Good Angel *and* Evil Angel.]

Good Angel. Sweet Faustus, leave that execrable art.

Faustus. Contrition, prayer, repentance — what of them?

Good Angel. Oh, they are means to bring thee unto heaven!

Evil Angel. Rather illusions, fruits of lunacy,
That make men foolish that do trust them most.

Good Angel. Sweet Faustus, think of heaven and heavenly things.

Evil Angel. No, Faustus; think of honor and of wealth.

[*Exeunt* Angels.]

Faustus. Of wealth!
Why, the seigniory of Emden[1] shall be mine.
When Mephistophilis shall stand by me,
What god can hurt thee, Faustus? thou art safe:
Cast no more doubts.— Come, Mephistophilis,
And bring glad tidings from great Lucifer;—
Is't not midnight? — come, Mephistophilis,
Veni, veni, Mephistophile![2]

[*Enter* Mephistophilis.]

Now tell me what says Lucifer, thy lord?

Mephistophilis. That I shall wait on Faustus whilst he lives,
So he will buy my service with his soul.

Faustus. Already Faustus hath hazarded that for thee.

Mephistophilis. But, Faustus, thou must bequeath it solemnly,
And write a deed of gift with thine own blood;
For that security craves great Lucifer.
If thou deny it, I will back to hell.

Faustus. Stay, Mephistophilis, and tell me, what good will my soul do thy lord?

Mephistophilis. Enlarge his kingdom.

Faustus. Is that the reason why he tempts us thus?

[1] Emden, German commercial town near mouth of the river Ems.
[2] Come, come, Mephistophilis!

MEPHISTOPHILIS. *Solamen miseris socios habuisse doloris.*[1]

FAUSTUS. Why, have you any pain, that torture others?

MEPHISTOPHILIS. As great as have the human souls of men.
But, tell me, Faustus, shall I have thy soul?
And I will be thy slave, and wait on thee,
And give thee more than thou hast wit to ask.

FAUSTUS. Aye, Mephistophilis, I give it thee.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Then, Faustus, stab thy arm courageously,
And bind thy soul, that at some certain day
Great Lucifer may claim it as his own;
And then be thou as great as Lucifer.

FAUSTUS. [*Stabbing his arm*] Lo, Mephistophilis, for love of thee,
I cut mine arm, and with my proper blood
Assure my soul to be great Lucifer's,
Chief lord and regent of perpetual night!
View here the blood that trickles from mine arm,
And let it be propitious for my wish.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. But, Faustus, thou must
Write it in manner of a deed of gift.

FAUSTUS. Aye, so I will. [*Writes.*] But, Mephistophilis,
My blood congeals, and I can write no more.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. I'll fetch thee fire to dissolve it straight.
[*Exit.*]

FAUSTUS. What might the staying of my blood portend?
Is it unwilling I should write this bill?
Why streams it not, that I may write afresh?
Faustus gives to thee his soul: ah, there it stayed!
Why shouldst thou not? is not thy soul thine own?
Then write again, *Faustus gives to thee his soul.*

[*Reënter* MEPHISTOPHILIS *with a chafer of coals.*]

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Here's fire; come, Faustus, set it on.

FAUSTUS. So, now the blood begins to clear again;
Now will I make an end immediately. [*Writes.*]

[1] Misery loves company.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Oh, what will not I do to obtain his soul!
[*Aside*]

FAUSTUS. *Consummatum est*;[1] this bill is ended,
And Faustus hath bequeathed his soul to Lucifer.
But what is this inscription on mine arm?
Homo, fuge;[2] whither should I fly?
If unto God, he'll throw me down to hell.
My senses are deceived; here's nothing writ: —
I see it plain; here in this place is writ,
Homo, fuge: yet shall not Faustus fly.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. I'll fetch him somewhat to delight his mind. [*Aside, and then exit.*]

[*Reënter* MEPHISTOPHILIS *with* Devils, *who give crowns and rich apparel to* FAUSTUS, *dance, and then depart.*]

FAUSTUS. Speak, Mephistophilis, what means this show?

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Nothing, Faustus, but to delight thy mind withal,
And to show thee what magic can perform.

FAUSTUS. But may I raise up spirits when I please?

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Aye, Faustus, and do greater things than these.

FAUSTUS. Then there's enough for a thousand souls.
Here, Mephistophilis, receive this scroll,
A deed of gift of body and of soul:
But yet conditionally that thou perform
All articles prescribed between us both.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Faustus, I swear by hell and Lucifer
To effect all promises between us made!

FAUSTUS. Then hear me read them. [*Reads.*]

On these conditions following. First, that Faustus may be a spirit in form and substance. Secondly, that Mephistophilis shall be his

[1] It is finished. [2] Man, flee!

servant, and at his command. Thirdly, that Mephistophilis shall do for him, and bring him whatsoever he desires. Fourthly, that he shall be in his chamber or house invisible. Lastly, that he shall appear to the said John Faustus, at all times, in what form or shape soever he please. I, John Faustus, of Wertenberg, Doctor, by these presents, do give both body and soul to Lucifer, prince of the East, and his minister Mephistophilis; and furthermore grant unto them, that, twenty-four years being expired, the articles above-written inviolate, full power to fetch or carry the said John Faustus, body and soul, flesh, blood, or goods, into their habitation wheresoever. By me, John Faustus.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Speak, Faustus, do you deliver this as your deed?

FAUSTUS. Aye, take it, and the devil give thee good on't!

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Now, Faustus, ask what thou wilt.

FAUSTUS. First will I question with thee about hell.
Tell me, where is the place that men call hell?

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Under the heavens.

FAUSTUS. Aye, but whereabout?

MEPHISTPOHILIS. Within the bowels of these elements,
Where we are tortured and remain forever:
Hell hath no limits, nor is circumscribed
In one self place; for where we are is hell,
And where hell is, there must we ever be:
And, to conclude, when all the world dissolves,
And every creature shall be purified,
All places shall be hell that are not heaven.

FAUSTUS. Come, I think hell's a fable.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Aye, think so still, till experience change thy mind.

FAUSTUS. Why, think'st thou, then, that Faustus shall be damned?

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Aye, of necessity, for here's the scroll
Wherein thou hast given thy soul to Lucifer.

FAUSTUS. Aye, and body too: but what of that?
Think'st thou that Faustus is so fond[1] to imagine
That, after this life, there is any pain?
Tush, these are trifles and mere old wives' tales.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. But, Faustus, I am an instance to prove the contrary,
For I am damned, and am now in hell.

FAUSTUS. How! now in hell!
Nay, an this be hell, I'll willingly be damned here:
What! walking, disputing, etc.
But, leaving off this, let me have a wife,
The fairest maid in Germany;
For I am wanton and lascivious,
And cannot live without a wife.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. How! a wife!
I prithee, Faustus, talk not of a wife.

FAUSTUS. Nay, sweet Mephistophilis, fetch me one, for I will have one.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Well, thou wilt have one? Sit there till I come: I'll fetch thee a wife in the devil's name. [*Exit.*]

[*Reënter* MEPHISTOPHILIS *with a* Devil *dressed like a woman, with fireworks.*]

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Tell me, Faustus, how dost thou like thy wife?

FAUSTUS. A plague on her for a hot whore!

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Tut, Faustus,
Marriage is but a ceremonial toy;
If thou lovest me, think no more of it.
I'll cull thee out the fairest courtesans,
And bring them every morning to thy bed:
She whom thine eye shall like, thy heart shall have,
Be she as chaste as was Penelope,
As wise as Saba,[2] or as beautiful

[1] foolish. [2] Queen of Sheba.

As was bright Lucifer before his fall.
Hold, take this book, peruse it thoroughly: [*Gives book.*]
The iterating of these lines brings gold;
The framing of this circle on the ground
Brings whirlwinds, tempests, thunder, and lightning;
Pronounce this thrice devoutly to thyself,
And men in armor shall appear to thee,
Ready to execute what thou desir'st.

FAUSTUS. Thanks, Mephistophilis: yet fain would I have a book wherein I might behold all spells and incantations, that I might raise up spirits when I please.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Here they are in this book.

[*Turns to them.*]

FAUSTUS. Now would I have a book where I might see all characters and planets of the heavens, that I might know their motions and dispositions.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Here they are too. [*Turns to them.*]

FAUSTUS. Nay, let me have one book more,— and then I have done,— wherein I might see all plants, herbs, and trees, that grow upon the earth.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Here they be.

FAUSTUS. Oh, thou art deceived.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Tut, I warrant thee. [*Turns to them.*]

FAUSTUS. When I behold the heavens, then I repent,
And curse thee, wicked Mephistophilis,
Because thou hast deprived me of those joys.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Why, Faustus,
Thinkest thou heaven is such a glorious thing?
I tell thee, 'tis not half so fair as thou,
Or any man that breathes on earth.

FAUSTUS. How prov'st thou that?

MEPHISTOPHILIS. 'Twas made for man, therefore is man more excellent.

FAUSTUS. If it were made for man, 'twas made for me:
I will renounce this magic and repent.

[*Enter* Good Angel *and* Evil Angel.]

Good Angel. Faustus, repent; yet God will pity thee.

Evil Angel. Thou art a spirit; God cannot pity thee.

Faustus. Who buzzeth in mine ears I am a spirit?
Be I a devil, yet God may pity me;
Aye, God will pity me, if I repent.

Evil Angel. Aye, but Faustus never shall repent.

[*Exeunt* Angels.]

Faustus. My heart's so hardened, I cannot repent:
Scarce can I name salvation, faith, or heaven,
But fearful echoes thunder in mine ears,
"Faustus, thou art damned!" then swords, and knives,
Poison, guns, halters, and envenomed steel
Are laid before me to dispatch myself;
And long ere this I should have slain myself,
Had not sweet pleasure conquered deep despair.
Have not I made blind Homer sing to me
Of Alexander's love and Œnon's death?
And hath not he, that built the walls of Thebes
With ravishing sound of his melodious harp,
Made music with my Mephistophilis?
Why should I die, then, or basely despair!
I am resolved; Faustus shall ne'er repent. —
Come, Mephistophilis, let us dispute again,
And argue of divine astrology.
Tell me, are there many heavens above the moon?
Are all celestial bodies but one globe,
As is the substance of this centric earth?

Mephistophilis. As are the elements, such are the spheres,
Mutually folded in each other's orb,
And, Faustus,
All jointly move upon one axletree,
Whose terminus is termed the world's wide pole;
Nor are the names of Saturn, Mars, or Jupiter
Feigned, but are erring stars.

FAUSTUS. But tell me, have they all one motion, both *situ et tempore*?[1]

MEPHISTOPHILIS. All jointly move from east to west in twenty-four hours upon the poles of the world; but differ in their motion upon the poles of the zodiac.

FAUSTUS. Tush,
These slender trifles Wagner can decide:
Hath Mephistophilis no greater skill?
Who knows not the double motion of the planets?
The first is finished in a natural day;

The second thus; as Saturn in thirty years; Jupiter in twelve; Mars in four; the Sun, Venus, and Mercury in a year; the Moon in twenty-eight days. Tush, these are freshmen's suppositions. But, tell me, hath every sphere a dominion or *intelligentia*?[2]

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Aye.

FAUSTUS. How many heavens or spheres are there?

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Nine; the seven planets, the firmament, and the empyreal heaven.

FAUSTUS. Well resolve me in this question; why have we not conjunctions, oppositions, aspects, eclipses, all at one time, but in some years we have more, in some less?

MEPHISTOPHILIS. *Per inaequalem motum respectu totius.*[3]

FAUSTUS. Well, I am answered. Tell me who made the world?

MEPHISTOPHILIS. I will not.

FAUSTUS. Sweet Mephistophilis, tell me.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Move me not, for I will not tell thee.

FAUSTUS. Villain, have I not bound thee to tell me anything?

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Aye, that is not against our kingdom; but this is.
Think thou on hell, Faustus, for thou art damned.

FAUSTUS. Think, Faustus, upon God that made the world.

[1] in direction and in time.
[2] understanding.
[3] on account of their unequal motion in relation to the whole.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Remember this. [*Exit.*]

FAUSTUS. Aye, go, accursèd spirit, to ugly hell!
'Tis thou hast damned distressèd Faustus' soul.
Is't not too late?

[*Reënter* GOOD ANGEL *and* EVIL ANGEL.]

EVIL ANGEL. Too late.

GOOD ANGEL. Never too late, if Faustus can repent.

EVIL ANGEL. If thou repent, devils shall tear thee in pieces.

GOOD ANGEL. Repent, and they shall never raze thy skin.
[*Exeunt* Angels.]

FAUSTUS. Ah, Christ, my Saviour,
Seek to save distressèd Faustus' soul!

[*Enter* LUCIFER, BELZEBUB, *and* MEPHISTOPHILIS.]

LUCIFER. Christ cannot save thy soul, for he is just:
There's none but I have interest in the same.

FAUSTUS. Oh, who art thou that look'st so terrible?

LUCIFER. I am Lucifer,
And this is my companion-prince in hell.

FAUSTUS. Oh, Faustus, they are come to fetch away thy soul!

LUCIFER. We come to tell thee thou dost injure us;
Thou talk'st of Christ, contrary to thy promise:
Thou shouldst not think of God: think of the devil,
And of his dam too.

FAUSTUS. Nor will I henceforth: pardon me in this,
And Faustus vows never to look to heaven,
Never to name God, or to pray to Him,
To burn his Scriptures, slay his ministers,
And make my spirits pull his churches down.

LUCIFER. Do so, and we will highly gratify thee. Faustus, we are come from hell to show thee some pastime: sit down, and thou shalt see all the Seven Deadly Sins appear in their proper shapes.

FAUSTUS. That sight will be as pleasing unto me,
As Paradise was to Adam, the first day
Of his creation.

LUCIFER. Talk not of Paradise nor creation; but mark this show: talk of the devil, and nothing else.— Come away!

[*Enter the* Seven Deadly Sins.]

Now, Faustus, examine them of their several names and dispositions.

FAUSTUS. What art thou, the first?

PRIDE. I am Pride. I disdain to have any parents. I am like to Ovid's flea; I can creep into every corner of a wench; sometimes, like a periwig, I sit upon her brow; or, like a fan of feathers, I kiss her lips; indeed, I do—what do I not? But, fie, what a scent is here! I'll not speak another word, except the ground were perfumed, and covered with cloth of arras.[1]

FAUSTUS. What art thou, the second?

COVETOUSNESS. I am Covetousness, begotten of an old churl, in an old leathern bag: and, might I have my wish, I would desire that this house and all the people in it were turned to gold, that I might lock you up in my good chest: oh, my sweet gold!

FAUSTUS. What art thou, the third?

WRATH. I am Wrath. I had neither father nor mother: I leaped out of a lion's mouth when I was scarce half an hour old; and ever since I have run up and down the world with this case [2] of rapiers, wounding myself when I had nobody to fight withal. I was born in hell; and look to it, for some of you shall be my father.[3]

FAUSTUS. What art thou, the fourth?

ENVY. I am Envy, begotten of a chimney-sweeper and an oyster-wife. I cannot read, and therefore wish all books were burned. I am lean with seeing others eat. Oh, that there would

[1] tapestry (*especially used for hangings on walls*).
[2] pair. [3] one of the devils must be my father.

come a famine through all the world, that all might die, and I live alone! then thou shouldst see how fat I would be. But must thou sit, and I stand? come down, with a vengeance!

FAUSTUS. Away, envious rascal! — What art thou, the fifth?

GLUTTONY. Who I, sir? I am Gluttony. My parents are all dead, and the devil a penny they have left me, but a bare pension, and that is thirty meals a day, and ten bevers,[1] — a small trifle to suffice nature. Oh, I come of a royal parentage! my grandfather was a Gammon of Bacon, my grandmother a Hogshead of Claret-wine; my godfathers were these, Peter Pickle-herring and Martin Martlemas-beef[2]; oh, but my godmother, she was a jolly gentlewoman, and well-beloved in every good town and city; her name was Mistress Margery March-beer. Now, Faustus, thou hast heard all my progeny; wilt thou bid me to supper?

FAUSTUS. No, I'll see thee hanged: thou wilt eat up all my victuals.

GLUTTONY. Then the devil choke thee!

FAUSTUS. Choke thyself, glutton! — What art thou, the sixth?

SLOTH. I am Sloth. I was begotten on a sunny bank, where I have lain ever since; and you have done me great injury to bring me from thence: let me be carried thither again by Gluttony and Lechery. I'll not speak another word for a king's ransom.

FAUSTUS. What are you, Mistress Minx, the seventh and last?

LECHERY. Who I, sir? I am one that loves an inch of raw mutton better than an ell of fried stock-fish; and the first letter of my name begins with *L*.

FAUSTUS. Away, to hell, to hell!

[*Exeunt the* Sins.]

LUCIFER. Now, Faustus, how dost thou like this?

[1] refreshments between meals.

[2] Martinmas was the usual time for hanging up salted provisions to dry for the winter.

FAUSTUS. Oh, this feeds my soul!
LUCIFER. Tut, Faustus, in hell is all manner of delight.
FAUSTUS. Oh, might I see hell, and return again,
How happy were I then!
LUCIFER. Thou shalt; I will send for thee at midnight.
In meantime take this book; peruse it throughly,
And thou shalt turn thyself into what shape thou wilt.
FAUSTUS. Great thanks, mighty Lucifer!
This will I keep as chary as my life.
LUCIFER. Farewell, Faustus, and think on the devil.
FAUSTUS. Farewell, great Lucifer.

[*Exeunt* LUCIFER *and* BELZEBUB.]

Come, Mephistophilis.

[*Exeunt.*]

[*Enter* CHORUS.]

CHORUS. Learnèd Faustus,
To know the secrets of astronomy
Graven in the book of Jove's high firmament,
Did mount himself to scale Olympus' top,
Being seated in a chariot burning bright,
Drawn by the strength of yoky dragons' necks.
He now is gone to prove cosmography,
And, as I guess, will first arrive in Rome,
To see the Pope and manner of his court,
And take some part of holy Peter's feast,
That to this day is highly solemnized. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter* FAUSTUS *and* MEPHISTOPHILIS.]

FAUSTUS. Having now, my good Mephistophilis,
Passed with delight the stately town of Trier,[1]
Environed round with airy mountain-tops,
With walls of flint, and deep-entrenchèd lakes,
Not to be won by any conquering prince;

[1] Treves, a city in West Prussia. The route described indicates a sight-seeing trip, not direct travel to Rome.

From Paris next, coasting the realm of France,
We saw the river Maine fall into Rhine,
Whose banks are set with groves of fruitful vines;
Then up to Naples, rich Campania,
Whose buildings fair and gorgeous to the eye,
The streets straight forth, and paved with finest brick,
Quarter the town in four equivalents:
There saw we learnèd Maro's[1] golden tomb,
The way he cut, an English mile in length,
Thorough a rock of stone, in one night's space;
From thence to Venice, Padua, and the rest,
In one of which a sumptuous temple stands,
That threats the stars with her aspiring top.
Thus hitherto hath Faustus spent his time:
But tell me now what resting-place is this?
Hast thou, as erst I did command,
Conducted me within the walls of Rome?

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Faustus, I have; and, because we will not be unprovided, I have taken up[2] his Holiness' privy chamber for our use.

FAUSTUS. I hope his Holiness will bid us welcome.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Tut, 'tis no matter, man; we'll be bold with his good cheer.
And now, my Faustus, that thou mayst perceive
What Rome containeth to delight thee with,
Know that this city stands upon seven hills
That underprop the groundwork of the same:
[Just through the midst runs flowing Tiber's stream
With winding banks that cut it in two parts;]
Over the which four stately bridges lean,
That make safe passage to each part of Rome:
Upon the bridge called Ponte Angelo
Erected is a castle passing strong,
Within whose walls such store of ordnance are,

[1] Virgil, regarded in the Middle Ages as a magician. [2] engaged.

And double cannons framed of carvèd brass,
As match the days within one complete year;
Besides the gates, and high pyramidès,
Which Julius Cæsar brought from Africa.

FAUSTUS. Now, by the kingdoms of infernal rule,
Of Styx, of Acheron, and the fiery lake
Of ever-burning Phlegethon, I swear
That I do long to see the monuments
And situation of bright-splendent Rome:
Come, therefore, let's away.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Nay, Faustus, stay: I know you'd fain see the Pope
And take some part of holy Peter's feast,
Where thou shalt see a troop of bald-pate friars,
Whose *summum bonum*[1] is in belly-cheer.

FAUSTUS. Well, I'm content to compass then some sport,
And by their folly make us merriment.
Then charm me, that I
May be invisible, to do what I please,
Unseen of any whilst I stay in Rome.

[MEPHISTOPHILIS *charms him.*]

MEPHISTOPHILIS. So, Faustus; now
Do what thou wilt, thou shalt not be discerned.

[*Sound a sennet.*[2] *Enter the* POPE *and the* CARDINAL OF LORRAIN *to the banquet, with* Friars *attending.*]

POPE. My Lord of Lorrain, will't please you draw near?

FAUSTUS. Fall to, and the devil choke you, an you spare!

POPE. How now! who's that which spake? — Friars, look about.

FIRST FRIAR. Here's nobody, if it like your Holiness.

POPE. My lord, here is a dainty dish was sent me from the Bishop of Milan.

[1] highest good. [2] A particular set of notes on trumpet or cornet.

FAUSTUS. I thank you, sir. [*Snatches the dish.*]

POPE. How now! who's that which snatched the meat from me? will no man look?—My lord, this dish was sent me from the Cardinal of Florence.

FAUSTUS. You say true; I'll ha't. [*Snatches the dish.*]

POPE. What, again!—My lord, I'll drink to your grace.

FAUSTUS. I'll pledge your grace. [*Snatches the cup.*]

CARDINAL OF LORRAIN. My lord, it may be some ghost, newly crept out of purgatory, come to beg a pardon of your Holiness.

POPE. It may be so.—Friars, prepare a dirge to lay the fury of this ghost.—Once again, my lord, fall to.

[*The* POPE *crosses himself.*]

FAUSTUS. What, are you crossing of yourself?
Well, use that trick no more, I would advise you.

[*The* POPE *crosses himself again.*]

Well, there's the second time. Aware the third;
I give you fair warning.

[*The* POPE *crosses himself again, and Faustus hits him a box of the ear; and they all run away.*]

Come on, Mephistophilis; what shall we do?

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Nay, I know not: we shall be cursed with bell, book, and candle.

FAUSTUS. How! bell, book, and candle,—candle, book, and bell,—
Forward and backward, to curse Faustus to hell!
Anon you shall hear a hog grunt, a calf bleat, and an ass bray,
Because it is Saint Peter's holiday.

[*Reënter all the* Friars *to sing the dirge.*]

FIRST FRIAR. Come, brethren, let's about our business with good devotion.

[*They sing:*]

Cursed be he that stole away his Holiness' meat from the table!
maledicat Dominus![1]
Cursed be he that struck his Holiness a blow on the face!
maledicat Dominus!
Cursed be he that took Friar Sandelo a blow on the pate!
maledicat Dominus!
Cursed be he that disturbeth our holy dirge!
maledicat Dominus!
Cursed be he that took away his Holiness' wine!
maledicat Dominus! Et omnes Sancti![2] Amen!

[MEPHISTOPHILIS *and* FAUSTUS *beat the* Friars, *and fling fireworks among them; and so exeunt.*]

[*Enter* CHORUS.]

CHORUS. When Faustus had with pleasure ta'en the view
Of rarest things, and royal courts of kings,
He stayed his course, and so returnèd home;
Where such as bear his absence but with grief,
I mean his friends and near'st companions,
Did gratulate his safety with kind words,
And in their conference of what befell,
Touching his journey through the world and air,
They put forth questions of astrology,
Which Faustus answered with such learnèd skill
As they admired and wondered at his wit.
Now is his fame spread forth in every land:
Amongst the rest the Emperor is one,
Carolus the Fifth, at whose palace now
Faustus is feasted 'mongst his noblemen.
What there he did, in trial of his art,
I leave untold; your eyes shall see ['t] performed. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter* ROBIN THE OSTLER, *with a book in his hand.*]

ROBIN. Oh, this is admirable! here I ha' stolen one of Doctor Faustus' conjuring books, and, i'faith, I mean to search some

[1] may the Lord curse him. [2] and all the saints.

circles for my own use. Now will I make all the maidens in our parish dance at my pleasure, stark naked, before me; and so by that means I shall see more than e'er I felt or saw yet.

[*Enter* RALPH, *calling* ROBIN.]

RALPH. Robin, prithee, come away; there's a gentleman tarries to have his horse, and he would have his things rubbed and made clean: he keeps such a chafing with my mistress about it; and she has set me to look thee out; prithee, come away.

ROBIN. Keep out, keep out, or else you are blown up, you are dismembered, Ralph: keep out, for I am about a roaring piece of work.

RALPH. Come, what doest thou with that same book? thou canst not read?

ROBIN. Yes, my master and mistress shall find that I can read, he for his forehead, she for her private study; she's born to bear with me, or else my art fails.

RALPH. Why, Robin, what book is that?

ROBIN. What book! why, the most intolerable book for conjuring that e'er was invented by any brimstone devil.

RALPH. Canst thou conjure with it?

ROBIN. I can do all these things easily with it; first, I can make thee drunk with ippocras[1] at any tavern in Europe for nothing; that's one of my conjuring works.

RALPH. Our Master Parson says that's nothing.

ROBIN. True, Ralph: and more, Ralph, if thou hast any mind to Nan Spit, our kitchen-maid, then turn her and wind her to thy own use, as often as thou wilt, and at midnight.

RALPH. Oh, brave, Robin! shall I have Nan Spit, and to mine own use? On that condition I'll feed thy devil with horse-bread as long as he lives, of free cost.

ROBIN. No more, sweet Ralph: let's go and make clean our boots, which lie foul upon our hands, and then to our conjuring in the devil's name. [*Exeunt.*]

[1] Wine sweetened and spiced

[*Enter* ROBIN *and* RALPH *with a silver goblet.*]

ROBIN. Come, Ralph: did not I tell thee, we were forever made by this Doctor Faustus' book? *ecce, signum*![1] here's a simple purchase[2] for horse-keepers: our horses shall eat no hay as long as this lasts.

RALPH. But, Robin, here comes the Vintner.

ROBIN. Hush! I'll gull[3] him supernaturally.

[*Enter* VINTNER.]

Drawer, I hope all is paid; God be with you!—Come, Ralph.

VINTNER. Soft, sir; a word with you. I must yet have a goblet paid from you, ere you go.

ROBIN. I a goblet, Ralph, I a goblet!—I scorn you; and you are but a, etc.[4] I a goblet! search me.

VINTNER. I mean so, sir, with your favor. [*Searches* ROBIN.]

ROBIN. How say you now?

VINTNER. I must say somewhat to your fellow.—You, sir!

ROBIN. Me, sir! me, sir! search your fill. [VINTNER *searches him.*] Now, sir, you may be ashamed to burden honest men with a matter of truth.

VINTNER. Well, one of you hath this goblet about you.

ROBIN. You lie, drawer, 'tis afore me. [*Aside*] Sirrah you, I'll teach you to impeach honest men;—stand by;—I'll scour you for a goblet;—stand aside you had best, I charge you in the name of Belzebub.—Look to the goblet, Ralph.

[*Aside to* RALPH]

VINTNER. What mean you, sirrah?

ROBIN. I'll tell you what I mean. [*Reads from a book.*] *Sanctobulorum Periphrasticon*—nay, I'll tickle you, Vintner.—Look to the goblet, Ralph. [*Aside to* RALPH] [*Reads.*] *Polypragmos Belseborams framanto pacostiphos tostu, Mephistophilis, etc.*[5]

[1] behold, the proof. [2] a clear gain. [3] dupe.

[4] The actor extemporized the words of abuse, as in some other speeches by clowns.

[5] As above, the comedian extemporized the nonsense jargon he spoke here.

[*Enter* MEPHISTOPHILIS, *sets squibs at their backs, and then exit. They run about.*]

VINTNER. *O, nomine Domini!*[1] what meanest thou, Robin? thou hast no goblet.

RALPH. *Peccatum peccatorum!*[2]— Here's thy goblet, good Vintner. [*Gives the goblet to* VINTNER, *who exit.*]

ROBIN. *Misericordia pro nobis!*[3] what shall I do? Good devil, forgive me now, and I'll never rob thy library more.

[*Reënter* MEPHISTOPHILIS.]

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Monarch of hell, under whose black survey
Great potentates do kneel with awful fear,
Upon whose altars thousand souls do lie,
How am I vexèd with these villains' charms?
From Constantinople am I hither come,
Only for pleasure of these damnèd slaves.

ROBIN. How, from Constantinople! you have had a great journey: will you take sixpence in your purse to pay for your supper and be gone?

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Well, villains, for your presumption, I transform thee into an ape, and thee into a dog; and so be gone! [*Exit.*]

ROBIN. How, into an ape! that's brave: I'll have fine sport with the boys; I'll get nuts and apples enow.

RALPH. And I must be a dog.

ROBIN. I'faith, thy head will never be out of the pottage-pot. [*Exeunt.*]

[*Enter* EMPEROR, FAUSTUS, *and a* KNIGHT, *with* Attendants.]

EMPEROR. Master Doctor Faustus, I have heard strange report of thy knowledge in the black art, how that none in my empire nor in the whole world can compare with thee for the rare effects of magic: they say thou hast a familiar spirit, by

[1] in the name of the Lord. [2] sin of sins. [3] mercy upon us.

whom thou canst accomplish what thou list. This, therefore, is my request, that thou let me see some proof of thy skill, that mine eyes may be witnesses to confirm what mine ears have heard reported: and here I swear to thee, by the honor of mine imperial crown, that, whatever thou doest, thou shalt be no ways prejudiced or endamaged.

KNIGHT. I'faith, he looks much like a conjurer. [*Aside*]

FAUSTUS. My gracious sovereign, though I must confess myself far inferior to the report men have published, and nothing answerable[1] to the honor of your imperial majesty, yet, for that love and duty binds me thereunto, I am content to do whatsoever your majesty shall command me.

EMPEROR. Then, Doctor Faustus, mark what I shall say.

As I was sometime solitary set
Within my closet, sundry thoughts arose
About the honor of mine ancestors,
How they had won by prowess such exploits,
Got such riches, subdued so many kingdoms,
As we that do succeed, or they that shall
Hereafter possess our throne, shall
(I fear me) ne'er attain to that degree
Of high renown and great authority:
Amongst which kings is Alexander the Great,
Chief spectacle of the world's preëminence,
The bright shining of whose glorious acts
Lightens the world with his reflecting beams,
As when I hear but motion[2] made of him,
It grieves my soul I never saw the man:
If, therefore, thou, by cunning of thine art,
Canst raise this man from hollow vaults below,
Where lies entombed this famous conqueror,
And bring with him his beauteous paramour,
Both in their right shapes, gesture, and attire
They used to wear during their time of life,

[1] proportionate. [2] mention.

Thou shalt both satisfy my just desire,
And give me cause to praise thee whilst I live.

FAUSTUS. My gracious lord, I am ready to accomplish your request, so far forth as by art and power of my spirit I am able to perform.

KNIGHT. I'faith, that's just nothing at all. [*Aside*]

FAUSTUS. But, if it like your grace, it is not in my ability to present before your eyes the true substantial bodies of those two deceased princes, which long since are consumed to dust.

KNIGHT. Aye, marry, Master Doctor, now there's a sign of grace in you, when you will confess the truth. [*Aside*]

FAUSTUS. But such spirits as can lively resemble Alexander and his paramour shall appear before your grace, in that manner that they both lived in, in their most flourishing estate; which I doubt not shall sufficiently content your imperial majesty.

EMPEROR. Go to, Master Doctor; let me see them presently.

KNIGHT. Do you hear, Master Doctor? you bring Alexander and his paramour before the Emperor!

FAUSTUS. How then, sir?

KNIGHT. I'faith, that's as true as Diana turned me to a stag.

FAUSTUS. No, sir; but, when Actæon[1] died, he left the horns[2] for you.— Mephistophilis, be gone.

[*Exit* MEPHISTOPHILIS.]

KNIGHT. Nay, an you go to conjuring, I'll be gone. [*Exit.*]

FAUSTUS. I'll meet with you anon for interrupting me so.— Here they are, my gracious lord.

[*Reënter* MEPHISTOPHILIS *with* Spirits *in the shapes of* ALEXANDER *and his* PARAMOUR.]

EMPEROR. Master Doctor, I heard this lady, while she lived, had a wart or mole in her neck: how shall I know whether it be so or no?

[1] In Greek mythology a hunter who surprised Diana while bathing, and was turned into a stag and destroyed by his own dogs.

[2] Supposedly worn by the husband of an unfaithful wife; a favorite jest in Elizabethan drama.

FAUSTUS. Your highness may boldly go and see.

EMPEROR. Sure, these are no spirits, but the true substantial bodies of those two deceased princes.

[*Exeunt* Spirits.]

FAUSTUS. Wilt please your highness now to send for the knight that was so pleasant with me here of late?

EMPEROR. One of you call him forth.

[*Exit* Attendant.]

[*Reënter the* KNIGHT *with a pair of horns on his head.*]

How now, sir knight! why, I had thought thou hadst been a bachelor, but now I see thou hast a wife, that not only gives thee horns, but makes thee wear them. Feel on thy head.

KNIGHT. Thou damnèd wretch and execrable dog,
Bred in the concave of some monstrous rock,
How dar'st thou thus abuse a gentleman?
Villain, I say, undo what thou hast done!

FAUSTUS. Oh, not so fast, sir! there's no haste: but, good, are you remembered how you crossed me in my conference with the Emperor? I think I have met with you for it.

EMPEROR. Good Master Doctor, at my entreaty release him: he hath done penance sufficient.

FAUSTUS. My gracious lord, not so much for the injury he offered me here in your presence, as to delight you with some mirth, hath Faustus worthily requited this injurious knight; which being all I desire, I am content to release him of his horns: — and, sir knight, hereafter speak well of scholars.— Mephistophilis, transform him straight. [MEPHISTOPHILIS *removes the horns.*]— Now, my good lord, having done my duty, I humbly take my leave.

EMPEROR. Farewell, Master Doctor: yet, ere you go,
Expect from me a bounteous reward.

[*Exeunt* EMPEROR, KNIGHT, *and* Attendants.]

FAUSTUS. Now, Mephistophilis, the restless course
That time doth run with calm and silent foot,

Shortening my days and thread of vital life,
Calls for the payment of my latest years:
Therefore, sweet Mephistophilis, let us
Make haste to Wertenberg.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. What, will you go on horseback or on foot?

FAUSTUS. Nay, till I'm past this fair and pleasant green,
I'll walk on foot.

[*Enter a* HORSE-COURSER.]

HORSE-COURSER. I have been all this day seeking one Master Fustian: mass, see where he is!— God save you Master Doctor!

FAUSTUS. What, horse-courser! you are well met.

HORSE-COURSER. Do you hear, sir? I have brought you forty dollars for your horse.

FAUSTUS. I cannot sell him so: if thou likest him for fifty, take him.

HORSE-COURSER. Alas, sir, I have no more!— I pray you, speak for me.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. I pray you, let him have him: he is an honest fellow, and he has a great charge, neither wife nor child.

FAUSTUS. Well, come, give me your money: [HORSE-COURSER *gives* FAUSTUS *the money.*] my boy will deliver him to you. But I must tell you one thing before you have him; ride him not into the water, at any hand.

HORSE-COURSER. Why, sir, will he not drink of all waters?

FAUSTUS. Oh, yes, he will drink of all waters; but ride him not into the water; ride him over hedge or ditch, or where thou wilt, but not into the water.

HORSE-COURSER. Well, sir.— Now am I made man forever: I'll not leave my horse for forty: if he had but the quality of hey-ding-ding, hey-ding-ding, I'd make a brave living on him: he has a buttock as slick as an eel. [*Aside*]— Well, God b'wi'ye, sir: your boy will deliver him me: but, hark you, sir; if my horse be sick or ill at ease, if I bring his water to you, you'll tell me what it is?

FAUSTUS. Away, you villain! what, dost think I am a horse-doctor?

[*Exit* HORSE-COURSER.]

What art thou, Faustus, but a man condemned to die?
Thy fatal time doth draw to final end;
Despair doth drive distrust into my thoughts:
Confound these passions with a quiet sleep:
Tush, Christ did call the thief upon the Cross;
Then rest thee, Faustus, quiet in conceit. [*Sleeps in his chair.*]

[*Reënter* HORSE-COURSER, *all wet, crying.*]

HORSE-COURSER. Alas, alas! Doctor Fustian,[1] quotha? mass, Doctor Lopus[2] was never such a doctor: has given me a purgation, has purged me of forty dollars; I shall never see them more. But yet, like an ass as I was, I would not be ruled by him, for he bade me I should ride him into no water; now I, thinking my horse had had some rare quality that he would not have had me known of, I, like a venturous youth, rid him into the deep pond at the town's end. I was no sooner in the middle of the pond, but my horse vanished away, and I sat upon a bottle[3] of hay, never so near drowning in my life. But I'll seek out my doctor, and have my forty dollars again, or I'll make it the dearest horse!— Oh, yonder is his snipper-snapper. Do you hear? you hey-pass,[4] where's your master?

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Why, sir, what would you? you cannot speak with him.

HORSE-COURSER. But I will speak with him.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Why, he's fast asleep: come some other time.

HORSE-COURSER. I'll speak with him now, or I'll break his glass-windows about his ears.

[1] good for nothing, bombastic (*from* fustian, *the name of a coarse cloth*).

[2] Roderigo Lopez, physician to Queen Elizabeth, hanged in 1594 on the charge of conspiring to poison her. As Marlowe died in 1593, the passage must have been added later — like much or all of the clown scenes.

[3] bundle. [4] juggler.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. I tell thee, he has not slept this eight nights.

HORSE-COURSER. An he have not slept this eight weeks, I'll speak with him.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. See, where he is, fast asleep.

HORSE-COURSER. Aye, this is he.— God save you, Master Doctor, Master Doctor, Master Doctor Fustian! forty dollars, forty dollars for a bottle of hay!

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Why, thou seest he hears thee not.

HORSE-COURSER. So-ho, ho! so-ho, ho! [*Hollows in his ear.*] No, will you not wake? I'll make you wake ere I go. [*Pulls* FAUSTUS *by the leg, and pulls it away.*] Alas, I am undone! what shall I do?

FAUSTUS. Oh, my leg, my leg!—Help, Mephistophilis! call the officers.— My leg, my leg!

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Come, villain, to the constable.

HORSE-COURSER. Oh, Lord, sir, let me go, and I'll give you forty dollars more!

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Where be they?

HORSE-COURSER. I have none about me: come to my ostry[1] and I'll give them you.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Be gone quickly.

[HORSE-COURSER *runs away.*]

FAUSTUS. What, is he gone? farewell he! Faustus has his leg again, and the Horse-courser, I take it, a bottle of hay for his labor: well, this trick shall cost him forty dollars more.

[*Enter* WAGNER.]

How now, Wagner! what's the news with thee?

WAGNER. Sir, the Duke of Vanholt doth earnestly entreat your company.

FAUSTUS. The Duke of Vanholt! an honorable gentleman, to whom I must be no niggard of my cunning. — Come, Mephistophilis, let's away to him. [*Exeunt.*]

[1] hostelry, inn.

[*Enter the* Duke of Vanholt, *the* Duchess, *and* Faustus.]

Duke. Believe me, Master Doctor, this merriment hath much pleased me.

Faustus. My gracious lord, I am glad it contents you so well. — But it may be, madam, you take no delight in this. I have heard that great-bellied women do long for some dainties or other: what is it, madam? tell me, and you shall have it.

Duchess. Thanks, good Master Doctor: and, for I see your courteous intent to pleasure me, I will not hide from you the thing my heart desires; and, were it now summer, as it is January and the dead time of the winter, I would desire no better meat than a dish of ripe grapes.

Faustus. Alas, madam, that's nothing! — Mephistophilis, be gone.

[*Exit* Mephistophilis.]

Were it a greater thing than this, so it would content you, you should have it.

[*Reënter* Mephistophilis *with grapes.*]

Here they be, madam: wilt please you taste on them?

Duke. Believe me, Master Doctor, this makes me wonder above the rest, that being in the dead time of winter and in the month of January, how you should come by these grapes.

Faustus. If it like your grace, the year is divided into two circles over the whole world, that, when it is here winter with us, in the contrary circle it is summer with them, as in India, Saba, and farther countries in the east; and by means of a swift spirit that I have, I had them brought hither, as you see. — How do you like them, madam? be they good?

Duchess. Believe me, Master Doctor, they be the best grapes that e'er I tasted in my life before.

Faustus. I am glad they content you so, madam.

Duke. Come, madam, let us in, where you must well reward this learned man for the great kindness he hath showed to you.

DUCHESS. And so I will, my lord; and, whilst I live, rest beholding for this courtesy.

FAUSTUS. I humbly thank your grace.

DUKE. Come, Master Doctor, follow us, and receive your reward. [*Exeunt.*]

[*Enter* WAGNER.]

WAGNER. I think my master means to die shortly,
For he hath given to me all his goods:
And yet, methinks, if that death were near,
He would not banquet, and carouse, and swill
Amongst the students, as even now he doth,
Who are at supper with such belly-cheer
As Wagner ne'er beheld in all his life.
See, where they come! belike the feast is ended. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter* FAUSTUS *with two or three* Scholars, *and* MEPHISTOPHILIS.]

FIRST SCHOLAR. Master Doctor Faustus, since our conference about fair ladies, which was the beautifulest in all the world, we have determined with ourselves that Helen of Greece was the admirablest lady that ever lived: therefore, Master Doctor, if you will do us that favor, as to let us see that peerless dame of Greece, whom all the world admires for majesty, we should think ourselves much beholding unto you.

FAUSTUS. Gentlemen,
For that I know your friendship is unfeigned,
And Faustus' custom is not to deny
The just requests of those that wish him well
You shall behold that peerless dame of Greece,
No otherways for pomp and majesty
Than when Sir Paris crossed the seas with her,
And brought the spoils to rich Dardania.
Be silent, then, for danger is in words.

[*Music sounds, and* HELEN *passeth over the stage.*]

SECOND SCHOLAR. Too simple is my wit to tell her praise,
Whom all the world admires for majesty.

THIRD SCHOLAR. No marvel though the angry Greeks pursued
With ten years' war the rape of such a queen,
Whose heavenly beauty passeth all compare.

FIRST SCHOLAR. Since we have seen the pride of Nature's works,
And only paragon of excellence,
Let us depart; and for this glorious deed
Happy and blest be Faustus evermore!

FAUSTUS. Gentlemen, farewell: the same I wish to you.

[*Exeunt* Scholars.]

[*Enter an* OLD MAN.]

OLD MAN. Ah, Doctor Faustus, that I might prevail
To guide thy steps unto the way of life,
By which sweet path thou mayst attain the goal
That shall conduct thee to celestial rest!
Break heart, drop blood, and mingle it with tears,
Tears falling from repentant heaviness
Of thy most vile and loathsome filthiness,
The stench whereof corrupts the inward soul
With such flagitious[1] crimes of heinous sin
As no commiseration may expel,
But mercy, Faustus, of thy Saviour sweet,
Whose blood alone must wash away thy guilt.

FAUSTUS. Where art thou, Faustus? wretch, what hast thou done?
Damned art thou, Faustus, damned; despair and die!
Hell calls for right, and with a roaring voice
Says, "Faustus, come; thine hour is almost come";
And Faustus now will come to do thee right.

[MEPHISTOPHILIS *gives him a dagger.*]

OLD MAN. Ah, stay, good Faustus, stay thy desperate steps!
I see an angel hovers o'er thy head,
And, with a vial full of precious grace,
Offers to pour the same into thy soul:
Then call for mercy, and avoid despair.

[1] grossly wicked.

FAUSTUS. Ah, my sweet friend, I feel
Thy words to comfort my distressèd soul!
Leave me a while to ponder on my sins.
OLD MAN. I go, sweet Faustus; but with heavy cheer,
Fearing the ruin of thy hopeless soul. [*Exit.*]
FAUSTUS. Accursèd Faustus, where is mercy now?
I do repent; and yet I do despair:
Hell strives with grace for conquest in my breast:
What shall I do to shun the snares of death?
MEPHISTOPHILIS. Thou traitor, Faustus, I arrest thy soul
For disobedience to my sovereign lord:
Revolt, or I'll in piecemeal tear thy flesh.
FAUSTUS. Sweet Mephistophilis, entreat thy lord
To pardon my unjust presumption,
And with my blood again I will confirm
My former vow I made to Lucifer.
MEPHISTOPHILIS. Do it, then, quickly, with unfeignèd heart,
Lest greater danger do attend thy drift.
FAUSTUS. Torment, sweet friend, that base and crooked age,[1]
That durst dissuade me from thy Lucifer,
With greatest torments that our hell affords.
MEPHISTOPHILIS. His faith is great; I cannot touch his soul;
But what I may afflict his body with
I will attempt, which is but little worth.
FAUSTUS. One thing, good servant, let me crave of thee,
To glut the longing of my heart's desire,—
That I might have unto my paramour
That heavenly Helen which I saw of late,
Whose sweet embracings may extinguish clean
Those thoughts that do dissuade me from my vow,
And keep mine oath I made to Lucifer.
MEPHISTOPHILIS. Faustus, this, or what else thou shalt desire,
Shall be performed in twinkling of an eye.

[1] The Old Man, who has just left.

[*Reënter* HELEN.]

FAUSTUS. Was this the face that launched a thousand ships,
And burnt the topless[1] towers of Ilium?—
Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.— [*Kisses her.*]
Her lips suck forth my soul: see, where it flies!
Come, Helen, come, give me my soul again.
Here will I dwell, for heaven is in these lips,
And all is dross that is not Helena.
I will be Paris, and for love of thee,
Instead of Troy, shall Wertenberg be sacked;
And I will combat with weak Menelaus,
And wear thy colors on my plumèd crest;
Yes, I will wound Achilles in the heel,
And then return to Helen for a kiss.
Oh, thou art fairer than the evening air
Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars;
Brighter art thou than flaming Jupiter
When he appeared to hapless Semele;
More lovely than the monarch of the sky
In wanton Arethusa's azured arms;
And none but thou shalt be my paramour! [*Exeunt.*]

[*Enter the* OLD MAN.]

OLD MAN. Accursèd Faustus, miserable man,
That from thy soul exclud'st the grace of heaven,
And fly'st the throne of his tribunal-seat!

[*Enter* Devils.]

Satan begins to sift me with his pride:
As in this furnace God shall try my faith,
My faith, vile hell, shall triumph over thee,
Ambitious fiends, see how the heavens smile
At your repulse, and laugh your state to scorn!
Hence, hell! for hence I fly unto my God.

[*Exeunt, on one side*, Devils; *on the other*, OLD MAN.]

[1] Not surpassed in height, or topped, by any others.

[*Enter* FAUSTUS, *with* Scholars.]

FAUSTUS. Ah, gentlemen!

FIRST SCHOLAR. What ails Faustus?

FAUSTUS. Ah, my sweet chamber-fellow, had I lived with thee, then had I lived still! but now I die eternally. Look, comes he not? comes he not?

SECOND SCHOLAR. What means Faustus?

THIRD SCHOLAR. Belike he is grown into some sickness by being oversolitary.

FIRST SCHOLAR. If it be so, we'll have physicians to cure him.— 'Tis but a surfeit; never fear, man.

FAUSTUS. A surfeit of deadly sin, that hath damned both body and soul.

SECOND SCHOLAR. Yet, Faustus, look up to heaven; remember God's mercies are infinite.

FAUSTUS. But Faustus' offense can ne'er be pardoned: the serpent that tempted Eve may be saved, but not Faustus. Ah, gentlemen, hear me with patience, and tremble not at my speeches! Though my heart pants and quivers to remember that I have been a student here these thirty years, oh, would I had never seen Wertenberg, never read book! and what wonders I have done, all Germany can witness, yea, all the world; for which Faustus hath lost both Germany and the world, yea, heaven itself, heaven, the seat of God, the throne of the blessed, the kingdom of joy; and must remain in hell forever, hell, ah, hell, forever! Sweet friends, what shall become of Faustus, being in hell forever?

THIRD SCHOLAR. Yet, Faustus, call on God.

FAUSTUS. On God, whom Faustus hath abjured! on God, whom Faustus hath blasphemed! Ah, my God, I would weep! but the devil draws in my tears. Gush forth blood, instead of tears! yea, life and soul! Oh, he stays my tongue! I would lift up my hands; but see, they hold them, they hold them!

ALL. Who, Faustus?

FAUSTUS. Lucifer and Mephistophilis. Ah, gentlemen, I gave them my soul for my cunning!

ALL. God forbid!

FAUSTUS. God forbade it, indeed; but Faustus hath done it: for vain pleasure of twenty-four years hath Faustus lost eternal joy and felicity. I writ them a bill with mine own blood: the date is expired; the time will come, and he will fetch me.

FIRST SCHOLAR. Why did not Faustus tell us of this before, that divines might have prayed for thee?

FAUSTUS. Oft have I thought to have done so; but the devil threatened to tear me in pieces, if I named God, to fetch both body and soul, if I once gave ear to divinity: and now 'tis too late. Gentlemen, away, lest you perish with me.

SECOND SCHOLAR. Oh, what shall we do to save Faustus?

FAUSTUS. Talk not of me, but save yourselves, and depart.

THIRD SCHOLAR. God will strengthen me; I will stay with Faustus.

FIRST SCHOLAR. Tempt not God, sweet friend; but let us into the next room, and there pray for him.

FAUSTUS. Aye, pray for me, pray for me; and what noise soever ye hear, come not unto me, for nothing can rescue me.

SECOND SCHOLAR. Pray thou, and we will pray that God may have mercy upon thee.

FAUSTUS. Gentlemen, farewell: if I live till morning, I'll visit you; if not, Faustus is gone to hell.

ALL. Faustus, farewell.

[*Exeunt* Scholars.— *The clock strikes eleven.*]

FAUSTUS. Ah, Faustus,
Now hast thou but one bare hour to live,
And then thou must be damned perpetually!
Stand still, you ever moving spheres of heaven,
That time may cease, and midnight never come;
Fair Nature's eye, rise, rise again, and make
Perpetual day; or let this hour be but
A year, a month, a week, a natural day,

That Faustus may repent and save his soul!
O lente, lente currite, noctis equi! [1]
The stars move still,[2] time runs, the clock will strike,
The devil will come, and Faustus must be damned.
Oh, I'll leap up to my God!— Who pulls me down?—
See, see, where Christ's blood streams in the firmament!
One drop would save my soul, half a drop: ah, my Christ!—
Ah, rend not my heart for naming of my Christ!
Yet will I call on him: oh, spare me, Lucifer!—
Where is it now? 'tis gone: and see, where God
Stretcheth out his arm, and bends his ireful brows!
Mountains and hills, come, come, and fall on me,
And hide me from the heavy wrath of God!
No, no!
Then will I headlong run into the earth:
Earth, gape! Oh, no, it will not harbor me!
You stars that reigned at my nativity,
Whose influence hath allotted death and hell,
Now draw up Faustus, like a foggy mist,
Into the entrails of yon laboring clouds,
That, when you vomit forth into the air,
My limbs may issue from your smoky mouths,
So that my soul may but ascend to heaven!

[*The clock strikes the half-hour.*]

Ah, half the hour is past! 'twill all be past anon.
O God,
If thou wilt not have mercy on my soul,
Yet for Christ's sake, whose blood hath ransomed me,
Impose some end to my incessant pain;
Let Faustus live in hell a thousand years,
A hundred thousand, and at last be saved;
Oh, no end is limited to damnèd souls!
Why wert thou not a creature wanting soul?

[1] Run slowly, slowly, horses of night (Ovid, "Amores," i, 13).
[2] without ceasing.

Or why is this immortal that thou hast?
Ah, Pythagoras' metempsychosis,[1] were that true,
This soul should fly from me, and I be changed
Unto some brutish beast! all beasts are happy,
For, when they die,
Their souls are soon dissolved in elements;
But mine must live still to be plagued in hell.
Curst be the parents that engendered me!
No, Faustus, curse thyself, curse Lucifer
That hath deprived thee of the joys of heaven.

[*The clock strikes twelve.*]

Oh, it strikes, it strikes! Now, body, turn to air,
Or Lucifer will bear thee quick to hell!

[*Thunder and lightning.*]

O soul, be changed into little water-drops,
And fall into the ocean — ne'er be found!

[*Enter* Devils.]

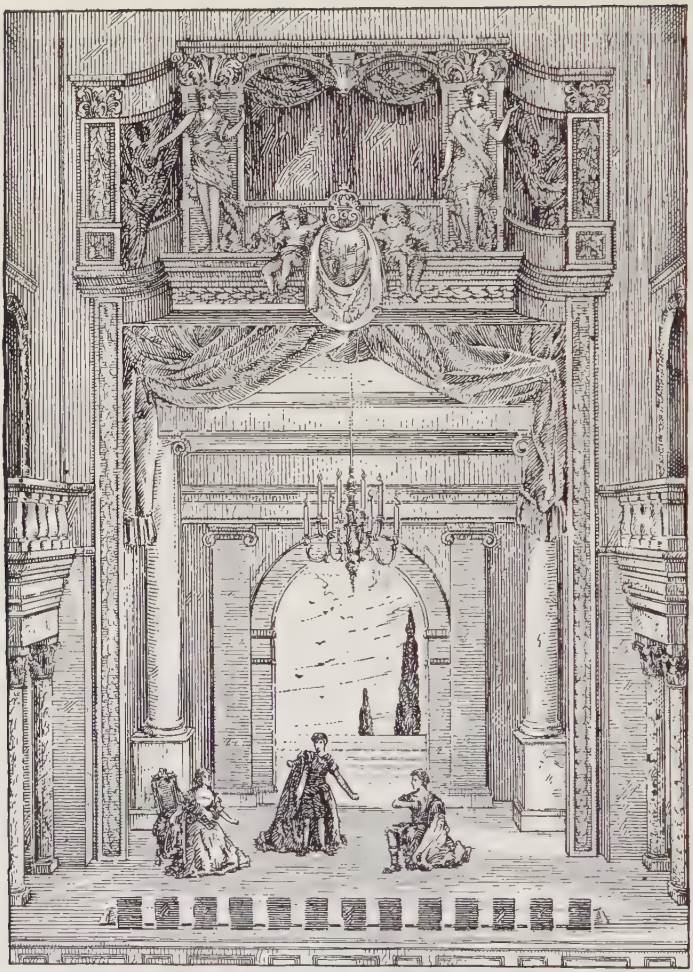
My God, my God, look not so fierce on me!
Adders and serpents, let me breathe a while!
Ugly hell, gape not! come not, Lucifer!
I'll burn my books!— Ah, Mephistophilis!

[*Exeunt* Devils *with* Faustus.]

[*Enter* Chorus.]

Chorus. Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight,
And burnèd is Apollo's laurel-bough,
That sometime grew within this learnèd man.
Faustus is gone: regard his hellish fall,
Whose fiendful fortune may exhort the wise,
Only to wonder at unlawful things,
Whose deepness doth entice such forward wits
To practice more than heavenly power permits. [*Exit.*]

[1] transmigration of souls.



THE DUKE'S THEATRE IN DORSET GARDEN

After a model designed by Herbert Norris

CLASSICAL TRAGEDY

ALL FOR LOVE, BY JOHN DRYDEN (1631–1700)

After the Restoration of the Stuart dynasty in 1660 and the reopening of the London theaters, Elizabethan tragedy never entirely recovered its preëminence. The reign of Charles II, the "mutton-eating king," was no age for the patriotic exultation of Shakespeare's histories; and the spirit of the times was too sophisticated, too critical, even too scientific, for the idealism of Shakespeare's comedies and tragedies. "Hamlet" continued a favorite through the acting of the great Betterton; but most Shakespearian plays were rewritten to suit the new taste, or they ceased to be popular. "It is the most insipid ridiculous play that I ever saw in my life," wrote Samuel Pepys, the great theatergoer, after seeing a performance of "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

The change was due, in part, to the great decrease in the number of theaters and to their more aristocratic audiences. In part it was due to the influence of French taste. The courtiers of Charles had returned from long exile in France, where, under Louis XIV, the greatest modern effort at classical style was at its height. The observations of Aristotle regarding Athenian drama had been reduced to a code of rules by the Italian Castelvetro (1570); and the French had carried restriction still further in their desire for a classical drama, and in conformity with the elaborate proprieties required by the taste of the French court. England was ripe for a similar restriction; the Elizabethan age was one of free experiment, but the Restoration era tended toward a conscious effort to secure form and order. (See Introduction, pp. xxi, xxii.)

Classical Tragedy

Dryden, born in central England and educated at Westminster School and at Trinity College, Cambridge, had come up to London to make his living as a professional man of letters. From 1660 to 1688 he sought and won the favor of the ruling class, becoming poet laureate and the leading writer of the period. From the overthrow of the Stuarts in 1688 until his own death in 1700, he was out of favor at court, addressing himself directly to the reading public and devoting his time to independent writing, such as translations and original poetry.

Like the Restoration age, of which he was the great literary representative, Dryden had many different interests. As a critic and something of a scholar he was drawn toward the French classical "rules." Later writers, especially Addison in "Cato" (1713), went further than Dryden in conformity to the "rules"; but Addison was not a dramatist, and his play seems hardly more than a frigid poetical exercise. Dryden, as a man of the theater, knew that his audiences wanted more variety and action; as a literary artist he outgrew the artificial and formal heroic drama in which he excelled, and he came more and more to admire Shakespeare. As early as 1675 Dryden had written of himself (prologue to "Aureng-Zebe"):

> "But spite of all his pride, a secret shame
> Invades his breast at Shakespeare's sacred name:
> Awed when he hears his godlike Romans rage,
> He, in a just despair, would quit the stage."

"All for Love" (1677) is based directly on Shakespeare's "Antony and Cleopatra," and Dryden often called his own play by the same name; but his is no mere copy or revision. Dryden simplifies the action, concentrating all attention on the two lovers. He omits the historical events of the ten preceding years in Shakespeare's play and begins after the fatal battle of Actium. The dramatic action takes place in one day and in a single closely connected story. Shakespeare used thirty-four named characters (besides messengers and the like) and forty-

two scenes; Dryden employs only twelve speaking parts, and the scene is apparently unchanged throughout, although Noyes suggests that there is a change from the temple to the palace of Cleopatra after the first act. The French rule of *la liaison des scènes*, which required that the stage must never be left vacant during an act, seems to be violated in Act V, where Alexas leaves the stage before the entrance of Antony and Ventidius.

The prologue and epilogue are, as in most plays of the period, in heroic couplets, and are devoted to bantering remarks which the author addresses to the audience. The play is in excellent blank verse, but the acts end in riming couplets, as in Shakespeare. It is curious to observe that Ventidius uses the formal "you" throughout, as to his superior; but Antony changes to the more intimate "thou" when he accepts Ventidius as his intimate companion.

The dialogue between Octavia and Cleopatra was much objected to, even in Dryden's time; and still, although he was at pains to defend it in his preface, and although the dialogue did give him an opportunity for a verse-debate of the sort in which he excelled, the passage is to most critics an unattractive one.

In certain other ways the play falls short. The action is necessarily slow, especially in Act I — although there is much compensation in the fine psychology of Antony's dialogue with Ventidius, a favorite passage with Dryden. The strict rules of dramatic construction limit the movement of the play, so that the tragedy tends to become chiefly psychological — "a study of mental struggles during a decisive moment of life." A semblance of forward progression is secured by the device of closing each act with a turn; but there is no such sweep of time and place as in Shakespeare, in whose play the whole world seems actually in arms. The scene here is no longer Roman, but is laid within doors in Alexandria. Antony is no longer a great triumvir battling for the world, but a quarreling lover, or, as Sir Walter Scott called him, "a sighing swain of Arcadia." Cleopatra is not the imperious "serpent of old Nile," but a "fond

mistress." There is no real struggle; the military conflict and the battle in Antony's own soul are alike ended before the play begins. Ventidius can only rouse his general to momentary enthusiasm and despair. The play is really narrative rather than dramatic in structure; it begins as if with the fifth act of Elizabethan drama.

The dialogue of "All for Love" shows how closely Dryden had been studying Shakespeare. It contains many "Shakespearian echoes," words and lines closely resembling others in the plays of the older dramatist; and some twenty-five passages are based on "Antony and Cleopatra" alone. The description of Cleopatra on the river Cydnos (Act III) is perhaps the most daring challenge ever made to Shakespeare on his own ground. The portents of impending disaster in the opening lines are reminiscent of similar passages in "Julius Cæsar" (I, iii), "Hamlet" (I, i), and "Macbeth" (II, iv).

"All for Love" is in many ways the supreme expression of Dryden and of his age in tragedy. It retains the qualities of Elizabethan tragedy which Restoration theatergoers admired, but it retells the story as it would appeal most to its new audience. It is one of the few plays on a Shakespearian theme which will bear comparison with the original. And it remained Dryden's own favorite among all the twenty-eight which he wrote or adapted. In his old age he said of it, "I never writ anything for myself but 'Antony and Cleopatra.'"

ALL FOR LOVE; OR, THE WORLD WELL LOST

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MARC ANTONY
VENTIDIUS, *his general*
DOLLABELLA, *his friend*
ALEXAS, *the Queen's eunuch*
SERAPION, *priest of Isis*
MYRIS, *another priest*
Servants to Antony

CLEOPATRA, *Queen of Egypt*
OCTAVIA, *Antony's wife*
CHARMION, IRAS } *Cleopatra's maids*
Antony's two little daughters

SCENE: *Alexandria*

PROLOGUE

What flocks of critics hover here to-day,
As vultures wait on armies for their prey,
All gaping for the carcass of a play!
With croaking notes they bode some dire event,
And follow dying poets by the scent.
Ours gives himself for gone; y'have watched your time!
He fights this day unarmed — without his rime;
And brings a tale which often has been told,
As sad as Dido's and almost as old.
His hero, whom you wits his bully call,
Bates of his mettle and scarce rants[1] at all:
He's somewhat lewd,[2] but a well-meaning mind;
Weeps much; fights little; but is wond'rous kind.
In short, a pattern and companion fit
For all the keeping Tonyes[3] of the pit.

[1] speaks bombastically (*as in the heroic plays*).
[2] ignorant. [3] fools who keep mistresses.

I could name more: a wife, and mistress too;
Both (to be plain) too good for most of you:
The wife well-natured, and the mistress true.
Now, poets, if your fame has been his care,
Allow him all the candor you can spare.
A brave man scorns to quarrel once a day,
Like Hectors[1] in at every petty fray.
Let those find fault whose wit's so very small,
They've need to show that they can think at all;
Errors like straws upon the surface flow;
He who would search for pearls must dive below.
Fops may have leave to level all they can,
As pygmies would be glad to lop a man.
Half-wits are fleas; so little and so light,
We scarce could know they live, but that they bite.
But, as the rich, when tired with daily feasts,
For change become their next poor tenants' guests;
Drink hearty drafts of ale from plain brown bowls,
And snatch the homely rasher[2] from the coals,
So you, retiring from much better cheer,
For once may venture to do penance here.
And since that plenteous autumn now is past,
Whose grapes and peaches have indulged your taste,
Take in good part, from our poor poet's board,
Such riveled[3] fruits as winter can afford.

ACT I

SCENE.[4] *The Temple of Isis*

[*Enter* SERAPION, MYRIS, *priests of Isis.*]

SERAPION. Portents and prodigies are grown so frequent
That they have lost their name. Our fruitful Nile
Flowed ere the wonted season, with a torrent

[1] bullies, ruffians.
[2] Thin slice of bacon.
[3] wrinkled.
[4] The same throughout.

So unexpected and so wondrous fierce,
That the wild deluge overtook the haste
E'en of the hinds that watched it: men and beasts
Were borne above the tops of trees that grew
On th'utmost margin of the water-mark.
Then with so swift an ebb the flood drove backward,
It slipped from underneath the scaly herd;
Here monstrous phocæ[1] panted on the shore;
Forsaken dolphins there, with their broad tails,
Lay lashing the departing waves; hard by 'em,
Sea-horses flound'ring in the slimy mud,
Tossed up their heads, and dashed the ooze about 'em.

[*Enter* ALEXAS *behind them.*]

MYRIS. Avert these omens, Heaven!

SERAPION. Last night, between the hours of twelve and one,
In a lone isle o'th'temple while I walked,
A whirlwind rose, that with a violent blast
Shook all the dome: the doors around me clapped;
The iron wicket that defends the vault
Where the long race of Ptolemies is laid,
Burst open, and disclosed the mighty dead.
From out each monument, in order placed,
An armèd ghost start[2] up: the boy-king last
Reared his inglorious head. A peal of groans
Then followed, and a lamentable voice
Cried, "Egypt is no more." My blood ran back;
My shaking knees against each other knocked;
On the cold pavement down I fell entranced,
And so unfinished left the horrid scene.

ALEXAS. [*Showing himself*] And dreamed you this? or did invent the story,
To frighten our Egyptian boys withal,
And train 'em up betimes in fear of priesthood?

[1] seals. [2] started.

SERAPION. My lord, I saw you not,
Nor meant my words should reach your ears; but what
I uttered was most true.
ALEXAS. A foolish dream,
Bred from the fumes of indigested feasts
And holy luxury.
SERAPION. I know my duty;
This goes no farther.
ALEXAS. 'Tis not fit it should.
Nor would the times now bear it, were it true.
All southern from yon hills, the Roman camp
Hangs o'er us black and threat'ning, like a storm
Just breaking on our heads.
SERAPION. Our faint Egyptians pray for Antony;
But in their servile hearts they own Octavius.
MYRIS. Why then does Antony dream out his hours,
And tempts not fortune for a noble day,
Which might redeem what Actium lost?
ALEXAS. He thinks 'tis past recovery.
SERAPION. Yet the foe
Seems not to press the siege.
ALEXAS. Oh, there's the wonder.
Mecænas and Agrippa, who can most[1]
With Cæsar, are his foes. His wife Octavia,
Driv'n from his house, solicits her revenge;
And Dollabella, who was once his friend,
Upon some private grudge now seeks his ruin;
Yet still war seems on either side to sleep.
SERAPION. 'Tis strange that Antony for some days past
Has not beheld the face of Cleopatra;
But here in Isis' temple lives retired,
And makes his heart a prey to black despair.
ALEXAS. 'Tis true; and we much fear he hopes by absence
To cure his mind of love.

[1] can accomplish most.

SERAPION. If he be vanquished,
Or make his peace, Egypt is doomed to be
A Roman province; and our plenteous harvests
Must then redeem the scarceness of their soil.
While Antony stood firm, our Alexandria
Rivaled proud Rome (dominion's other seat),
And Fortune, striding like a vast Colossus,
Could fix an equal foot of empire here.

ALEXAS. Had I my wish, these tyrants of all nature
Who lord it o'er mankind, should perish — perish
Each by the other's sword; but, since our will
Is lamely followed by our power, we must
Depend on one, with him to rise or fall.

SERAPION. How stands the queen affected?

ALEXAS. Oh, she dotes,
She dotes, Serapion, on this vanquished man,
And winds herself about his mighty ruins;
Whom would she yet forsake, yet yield him up,
This hunted prey, to his pursuer's hands,
She might preserve us all; but 'tis in vain —
This changes my designs, this blasts my counsels,
And makes me use all means to keep him here,
Whom I could wish divided from her arms,
Far as the earth's deep center. Well, you know
The state of things; no more of your ill omens
And black prognostics; labor to confirm
The people's hearts.

[*Enter* VENTIDIUS, *talking aside with a* Gentleman of ANTONY'S.]

SERAPION. These Romans will o'erhear us.
But who's that stranger? By his warlike port,
His fierce demeanor, and erected look,
He's of no vulgar note.

ALEXAS. Oh, 'tis Ventidius,
Our emp'ror's great lieutenant in the East,

Who first showed Rome that Parthia could be conquered.
When Antony returned from Syria last,
He left this man to guard the Roman frontiers.

SERAPION. You seem to know him well.

ALEXAS. Too well. I saw him in Cilicia first,
When Cleopatra there met Antony;
A mortal foe he was to us, and Egypt.
But, let me witness to the worth I hate,
A braver Roman never drew a sword.
Firm to his prince; but as a friend, not slave.
He ne'er was of his pleasures; but presides
O'er all his cooler hours and morning counsels;
In short, the plainness, fierceness, rugged virtue
Of an old true-stamped Roman lives in him.
His coming bodes I know not what of ill
To our affairs. Withdraw, to mark him better;
And I'll acquaint you why I sought you here,
And what's our present work.

[*They withdraw to a corner of the stage; and* VENTIDIUS, *with the other, comes forward to the front.*]

VENTIDIUS. Not see him, say you?
I say, I must and will.

GENTLEMAN. He has commanded,
On pain of death none should approach his presence.

VENTIDIUS. I bring him news will raise his drooping spirits,
Give him new life.

GENTLEMAN. He sees not Cleopatra.

VENTIDIUS. Would he had never seen her!

GENTLEMAN. He eats not, drinks not, sleeps not, has no use
Of anything, but thought; or, if he talks,
'Tis to himself, and then 'tis perfect raving;
Then he defies the world, and bids it pass;
Sometimes he gnaws his lip, and curses loud
The boy Octavius; then he draws his mouth

Into a scornful smile, and cries, "Take all,
The world's not worth my care."

VENTIDIUS. Just, just his nature.
Virtue's his path; but sometimes 'tis too narrow
For his vast soul; and then he starts out wide,
And bounds into a vice that bears him far
From his first course, and plunges him in ills:
But when his danger makes him find his fault,
Quick to observe and full of sharp remorse,
He censures eagerly his own misdeeds,
Judging himself with malice to himself,
And not forgiving what as a man he did,
Because his other parts are more than man.
He must not thus be lost.

[ALEXAS *and the* Priests *come forward.*]

ALEXAS. You have your full instructions, now advance;
Proclaim your orders loudly.

SERAPION. Romans, Egyptians, hear the queen's command.
Thus Cleopatra bids: "Let labor cease,
To pomp and triumphs give this happy day,[1]
That gave the world a lord: 'tis Antony's."
Live, Antony; and Cleopatra live!
Be this the general voice sent up to Heaven,
And every public place repeat this echo.

VENTIDIUS. [*Aside*] Fine pageantry!

SERAPION. Set out before your doors
The images of all your sleeping fathers,
With laurels crowned; with laurels wreathe your posts,
And strew with flowers the pavement; let the priests
Do present[2] sacrifice; pour out the wine,
And call the gods to join with you in gladness.

VENTIDIUS. Curse on the tongue that bids this general joy!
Can they be friends of Antony, who revel

[1] Antony's birthday. [2] immediate.

When Antony 's in danger? Hide, for shame,
You Romans, your great grandsires' images,
For fear their souls should animate their marbles,
To blush at their degenerate progeny.

ALEXAS. A love, which knows no bounds, to Antony,
Would mark the day with honors, when all Heaven
Labored for him, when each propitious star
Stood wakeful in his orb, to watch that hour,
And shed his better influence. Her own birthday
Our queen neglected, like a vulgar fate
That passed obscurely by.

VENTIDIUS. Would it had slept,
Divided far from his; till some remote
And future age had called it out, to ruin
Some other prince, not him.

ALEXAS. Your emperor,
Though grown unkind, would be more gentle than
T'upbraid my queen for loving him too well.

VENTIDIUS. Does the mute sacrifice upbraid the priest?
He knows him not his executioner.
Oh, she has decked his ruin with her love,
Led him in golden bands to gaudy slaughter,
And made perdition pleasing; she has left him
The blank of what he was;
I tell thee, eunuch, she has quite unmanned him.
Can any Roman see, and know him now,
Thus altered from the lord of half mankind,
Unbent, unsinewed, made a woman's toy,
Shrunk from the vast extent of all his honors,
And cramped within a corner of the world?
Oh, Antony!
Thou bravest soldier and thou best of friends!
Bounteous as nature; next to nature's God!
Couldst thou but make new worlds, so wouldst thou give 'em,
As bounty were thy being. Rough in battle

As the first Romans when they went to war;
Yet after victory more pitiful
Than all their praying virgins left at home!

ALEXAS. Would you could add to those more shining virtues,
His truth to her who loves him.

VENTIDIUS. Would I could not!
But wherefore waste I precious hours with thee?
Thou art her darling mischief, her chief engine,
Antony's other fate. Go, tell thy queen,
Ventidius is arrived, to end her charms.
Let your Egyptian timbrels play alone;
Nor mix effeminate sounds with Roman trumpets.
You dare not fight for Antony; go pray,
And keep your cowards'-holy-day in temples.

[*Exeunt* ALEXAS, SERAPION.]

[*Reënter the* Gentlemen of M. ANTONY.]

2 GENTLEMAN. The emperor approaches, and commands,
On pain of death, that none presume to stay.

1 GENTLEMAN. I dare not disobey him.

[*Going out with the other*]

VENTIDIUS. Well, I dare.
But I'll observe him first unseen, and find
Which way his humor drives, the rest I'll venture.

[*Withdraws.*]

[*Enter* ANTONY, *walking with a disturbed motion, before he speaks.*]

ANTONY. They tell me, 'tis my birthday, and I'll keep it
With double pomp of sadness.
'Tis what the day deserves which gave me breath.
Why was I raised the meteor of the world,
Hung in the skies, and blazing as I traveled,
Till all my fires were spent; and then cast downward
To be trod out by Cæsar?

VENTIDIUS. [*Aside*] On my soul;
'Tis mournful, wondrous mournful!

ANTONY. Count thy gains.
Now, Antony, wouldst thou be born for this?
Glutton of fortune, thy devouring youth
Has starved thy wanting age.
VENTIDIUS. [*Aside*] How sorrow shakes him!
So, now the tempest tears him up by th'roots,
And on the ground extends the noble ruin.
[ANTONY *having thrown himself down*]
ANTONY. Lie there, thou shadow of an emperor;
The place thou pressest on thy mother earth
Is all thy empire now: now it contains thee:
Some few days hence, and then 'twill be too large,
When thou'rt contracted in thy narrow urn,
Shrunk to a few cold ashes; then Octavia
(For Cleopatra will not live to see it),
Octavia then will have thee all her own,
And bear thee in her widowed hand to Cæsar;
Cæsar will weep, the crocodile will weep,[1]
To see his rival of the universe
Lie still and peaceful there. I'll think no more on't.
Give me some music; look that it be sad;
I'll soothe my melancholy, till I swell
And burst myself with sighing. — [*Soft music*]
'Tis somewhat to my humor; stay, I fancy
I'm now turned wild, a commoner of nature,
Of all forsaken and forsaking all;
Live in a shady forest's sylvan scene,
Stretched at my length beneath some blasted oak,
I lean my head upon the mossy bark,
And look just of a piece as I grew from it;
My uncombed locks, matted like mistletoe,
Hang o'er my hoary face; a murm'ring brook
Runs at my foot.

[1] Ancient travelers reported that crocodiles weep over those they devour.

VENTIDIUS. [*Aside*] Methinks I fancy
Myself there too.
ANTONY. The herd come jumping by me,
And, fearless, quench their thirst, while I look on,
And take me for their fellow citizen.
More of this image, more; it lulls my thoughts.
[*Soft music again*]
VENTIDIUS. [*Aside*] I must disturb him; I can hold no longer.
[*Stands before him.*]
ANTONY. [*Starting up*] Art thou Ventidius?
VENTIDIUS. Are you Antony?
I'm liker what I was, than you to him
I left you last.
ANTONY. I'm angry.
VENTIDIUS. So am I.
ANTONY. I would be private; leave me.
VENTIDIUS. Sir, I love you,
And therefore will not leave you.
ANTONY. Will not leave me!
Where have you learned that answer? Who am I?
VENTIDIUS. My emperor; the man I love next Heaven;
If I said more, I think 'twere scarce a sin;
Y'are all that's good, and god-like.
ANTONY. All that's wretched.
You will not leave me then?
VENTIDIUS. 'Twas too presuming
To say I would not; but I dare not leave you;
And, 'tis unkind in you to chide me hence
So soon, when I so far have come to see you.
ANTONY. Now thou hast seen me, art thou satisfied?
For, if a friend, thou hast beheld enough;
And, if a foe, too much.
VENTIDIUS. [*Weeping*] Look, emperor, this is no common dew.
I have not wept this forty year; but now

My mother comes afresh into my eyes;
I cannot help her softness.

ANTONY. By Heav'n, he weeps, poor good old man, he weeps!
The big round drops course[1] one another down
The furrows of his cheeks. Stop 'em, Ventidius,
Or I shall blush to death; they set my shame,
That caused 'em, full before me.

VENTIDIUS. I'll do my best.

ANTONY. Sure there's contagion in the tears of friends:
See, I have caught it too. Believe me, 'tis not
For my own griefs, but thine — Nay, father.

VENTIDIUS. Emperor.

ANTONY. Emperor! Why, that's the style of victory,
The conqu'ring soldier, red with unfelt wounds,
Salutes his general so: but never more
Shall that sound reach my ears.

VENTIDIUS. I warrant you.

ANTONY. Actium, Actium! Oh —

VENTIDIUS. It sits too near you.

ANTONY. Here, here it lies; a lump of lead by day,
And, in my short distracted nightly slumbers,
The hag that rides my dreams —

VENTIDIUS. Out with it, give it vent.

ANTONY. Urge not my shame.
I lost a battle.

VENTIDIUS. So has Julius[2] done.

ANTONY. Thou favor'st me, and speak'st not half thou think'st;
For Julius fought it out, and lost it fairly:
But Antony —

VENTIDIUS. Nay, stop not.

ANTONY. Antony
(Well, thou wilt have it), like a coward, fled,
Fled while his soldiers fought; fled first, Ventidius.

[1] pursue. [2] Julius Cæsar.

Thou long'st to curse me, and I give thee leave.
I know thou cam'st prepared to rail.
VENTIDIUS. I did.
ANTONY. I'll help thee.— I have been a man, Ventidius —
VENTIDIUS. Yes, and a brave one; but —
ANTONY. I know thy meaning,
But I have lost my reason, have disgraced
The name of soldier with inglorious ease;
In the full vintage of my flowing honors,
Sat still, and saw it pressed by other hands.
Fortune came smiling to my youth, and wooed it,
And purple greatness met my ripened years.
When first I came to empire, I was borne
On tides of people, crowding to my triumphs,
The wish of nations; and the willing world
Received me as its pledge of future peace;
I was so great, so happy, so belov'd,
Fate could not ruin me; till I took pains,
And worked against my fortune, chid her from me,
And turned her loose; yet still she came again.
My careless days, and my luxurious nights,
At length have wearied her, and now she's gone,
Gone, gone, divorced forever. Help me, soldier,
To curse this madman, this industrious fool,
Who labored to be wretched; prithee, curse me.
VENTIDIUS. No.
ANTONY. Why?
VENTIDIUS. You are too sensible already
Of what y'have done, too conscious of your failings;
And, like a scorpion, whipped by others first
To fury, sting yourself in mad revenge.
I would bring balm and pour it in your wounds,
Cure your distempered mind, and heal your fortunes.
ANTONY. I know thou wouldst.
VENTIDIUS. I will.

ANTONY. Ha, ha, ha, ha!
VENTIDIUS. You laugh.
ANTONY. I do, to see officious love
Give cordials to the dead.
VENTIDIUS. You would be lost then?
ANTONY. I am.
VENTIDIUS. I say you are not. Try your fortune.
ANTONY. I have, to th'utmost. Dost thou think me desperate
Without just cause? No, when I found all lost
Beyond repair, I hid me from the world,
And learned to scorn it here; which now I do
So heartily, I think it is not worth
The cost of keeping.
VENTIDIUS. Cæsar thinks not so;
He'll thank you for the gift he could not take.
You would be killed like Tully,[1] would you? Do,
Hold out your throat to Cæsar, and die tamely.
ANTONY. No, I can kill myself; and so resolve.
VENTIDIUS. I can die with you too, when time shall serve;
But fortune calls upon us now to live,
To fight, to conquer.
ANTONY. Sure thou dream'st, Ventidius.
VENTIDIUS. No; 'tis you dream; you sleep away your hours
In desperate sloth, miscalled philosophy.
Up, up, for honor's sake; twelve legions wait you,
And long to call you chief; by painful journeys
I led 'em, patient both of heat and hunger,
Down from the Parthian marches[2] to the Nile.
'Twill do you good to see their sunburned faces,
Their scarred cheeks, and chopped hands; there's virtue in 'em.
They'll sell those mangled limbs at dearer rates
Than yon trim bands can buy.
ANTONY. Where left you them?
VENTIDIUS. I said in Lower Syria.

[1] Cicero. [2] boundaries.

ANTONY. Bring 'em hither;
There may be life in these.
VENTIDIUS. They will not come.
ANTONY. Why didst thou mock my hopes with promised aids,
To double my despair? They're mutinous.
VENTIDIUS. Most firm and loyal.
ANTONY. Yet they will not march
To succor me. O trifler!
VENTIDIUS. They petition
You would make haste to head 'em.
ANTONY. I'm besieged.
VENTIDIUS. There's but one way shut up; how came I hither?
ANTONY. I will not stir.
VENTIDIUS. They would perhaps desire
A better reason.
ANTONY. I have never used[1]
My soldiers to demand a reason of
My actions. Why did they refuse to march?
VENTIDIUS. They said they would not fight for Cleopatra.
ANTONY. What was't they said?
VENTIDIUS. They said they would not fight for Cleopatra.
Why should they fight, indeed, to make her conquer,
And make you more a slave? to gain you kingdoms,
Which, for a kiss, at your next midnight feast
You'll sell to her? Then she new-names her jewels,
And calls this diamond such or such a tax;
Each pendant in her ear shall be a province.
ANTONY. Ventidius, I allow your tongue free license
On all my other faults; but, on your life,
No word of Cleopatra; she deserves
More worlds than I can lose.
VENTIDIUS. Behold, you Powers,
To whom you have entrusted humankind;

[1] accustomed.

See Europe, Afric', Asia, put in balance,
And all weighed down by one light, worthless woman!
I think the gods are Antonys, and give
Like prodigals this nether world away
To none but wasteful hands.

ANTONY. You grow presumptuous.

VENTIDIUS. I take the privilege of plain love to speak.

ANTONY. Plain love! plain arrogance, plain insolence!
Thy men are cowards; thou, an envious traitor;
Who, under seeming honesty, hast vented
The burden of thy rank, o'erflowing gall.
O that thou wert my equal,[1] great in arms
As the first Cæsar was, that I might kill thee
Without a stain to honor!

VENTIDIUS. You may kill me;
You have done more already, called me traitor.

ANTONY. Art thou not one?

VENTIDIUS. For showing you yourself,
Which none else durst have done? But had I been
That name which I disdain to speak again,
I needed not have sought your abject fortunes,
Come to partake your fate, to die with you.
What hindred me t'have led my conqu'ring eagles
To fill Octavius's bands? I could have been
A traitor then, a glorious, happy traitor,
And not have been so called.

ANTONY. Forgive me, soldier;
I've been too passionate.

VENTIDIUS. You thought me false;
Thought my old age betrayed you; kill me, sir;
Pray, kill me; yet you need not, your unkindness
Has left your sword no work.

ANTONY. I did not think so;
I said it in my rage; prithee, forgive me;

[1] According to the conventional decorum of duels in Dryden's day.

Why didst thou tempt my anger, by discovery
Of what I would not hear?
VENTIDIUS. No prince but you
Could merit that sincerity I used,
Nor durst another man have ventured it;
But you, ere love misled your wandering eyes,
Were sure the chief and best of human race,
Framed in the very pride and boast of nature;
So perfect, that the gods, who formed you, wondered
At their own skill, and cried, "A lucky hit
Has mended our design." Their envy hindered,
Else you had been immortal, and a pattern,[1]
When Heav'n would work for ostentation's sake,
To copy out again.
ANTONY. But Cleopatra —
Go on; for I can bear it now.
VENTIDIUS. No more.
ANTONY. Thou dar'st not trust my passion; but thou may'st;
Thou only lov'st, the rest have flattered me.
VENTIDIUS. Heav'n's blessing on your heart for that kind word!
May I believe you love me? Speak again.
ANTONY. Indeed I do. Speak this, and this, and this.
[*Hugging him*]
Thy praises were unjust; but I'll deserve 'em,
And yet mend all. Do with me what thou wilt;
Lead me to victory, thou know'st the way.
VENTIDIUS. And will you leave this —
ANTONY. Prithee, do not curse her,
And I will leave her; though, Heav'n knows, I love
Beyond life, conquest, empire, all but honor:
But I will leave her.
VENTIDIUS. That's my royal master;
And shall we fight?

[1] Allusion to the Platonic idea of divine patterns, after which created things were made.

ANTONY. I warrant thee, old soldier.
Thou shalt behold me once again in iron;
And at the head of our old troops, that beat
The Parthians, cry aloud, "Come, follow me!"
VENTIDIUS. Oh, now I hear my emperor! in that word
Octavius fell. Gods, let me see that day,
And, if I have ten years behind, take all;
I'll thank you for th'exchange.
ANTONY. Oh, Cleopatra!
VENTIDIUS. Again?
ANTONY. I've done; in that last sigh she went.
Cæsar shall know what 'tis to force a lover
From all he holds most dear.
VENTIDIUS. Methinks you breathe
Another soul; your looks are more divine;
You speak a hero, and you move a god.
ANTONY. Oh, thou hast fired me; my soul's up in arms,
And mans each part about me; once again,
That noble eagerness of fight has seized me;
That eagerness with which I darted upward
To Cassius's camp; in vain the steepy hill
Opposed my way; in vain a war of spears
Sung round my head and planted all my shield;
I won the trenches while my foremost men
Lagged on the plain below.
VENTIDIUS. Ye gods, ye gods,
For such another hour!
ANTONY. Come on, my soldier!
Our hearts and arms are still the same; I long
Once more to meet our foes; that thou and I,
Like Time and Death, marching before our troops,
May taste[1] fate to 'em; mow 'em out a passage,
And entr'ing where the foremost squadrons yield,
Begin the noble harvest of the field. [*Exeunt.*]

[1] foreshadow.

ACT II

[CLEOPATRA, IRAS, *and* ALEXAS]

CLEOPATRA. What shall I do, or whither shall I turn?
Ventidius has o'ercome, and he will go.

ALEXAS. He goes to fight for you.

CLEOPATRA. Then he would see me, ere he went to fight;
Flatter me not; if once he goes, he's lost,
And all my hopes destroyed.

ALEXAS. Does this weak passion
Become a mighty queen?

CLEOPATRA. I am no queen:
Is this to be a queen, to be besieged
By yon insulting Roman, and to wait
Each hour the victor's chain? These ills are small:
For Antony is lost, and I can mourn
For nothing else but him. Now come, Octavius,
I have no more to lose; prepare thy bands;
I'm fit to be a captive; Antony
Has taught my mind the fortune of a slave.

IRAS. Call reason to assist you.

CLEOPATRA. I have none.
And none would have; my love's a noble madness,
Which shows the cause deserved it. Moderate sorrow
Fits vulgar love, and for a vulgar man;
But I have loved with such transcendent passion,
I soared,[1] at first, quite out of reason's view,
And now am lost above it. No, I'm proud
'Tis thus; would Antony could see me now!
Think you he would not sigh? Though he must leave me,
Sure he would sigh; for he is noble-natured,
And bears a tender heart: I know him well.
Ah, no, I know him not; I knew him once,
But now 'tis past.

[1] Allusion to the sport of hawking.

IRAS. Let it be past with you:
Forget him, madam.
CLEOPATRA. Never, never, Iras.
He once was mine; and once, though now 'tis gone,
Leaves a faint image of possession still.
ALEXAS. Think him unconstant, cruel, and ungrateful.
CLEOPATRA. I cannot; if I could, those thoughts were vain;
Faithless, ungrateful, cruel though he be,
I still must love him.

[*Enter* CHARMION.]

Now, what news, my Charmion?
Will he be kind? and will he not forsake me?
Am I to live, or die?— nay, do I live?
Or am I dead? for when he gave his answer,
Fate took the word, and then I lived or died.
CHARMION. I found him, madam —
CLEOPATRA. A long speech preparing?
If thou bring'st comfort, haste, and give it me,
For never was more need.
IRAS. I know he loves you.
CLEOPATRA. Had he been kind, her eyes had told me so,
Before her tongue could speak it; now she studies
To soften what he said; but give me death,
Just as he sent it, Charmion, undisguised,
And in the words he spoke.
CHARMION. I found him, then,
Encompassed round, I think, with iron statues;
So mute, so motionless his soldiers stood,
While awfully he cast his eyes about,
And every leader's hopes or fears surveyed;
Methought he looked resolved, and yet not pleased.
When he beheld me struggling in the crowd,
He blushed, and bade make way.
ALEXAS. There's comfort yet.

CHARMION. Ventidius fixed his eyes upon my passage
Severely, as he meant to frown me back.
And sullenly gave place; I told my message,
Just as you gave it, broken and disordered;
I numbered in it all your sighs and tears,
And while I moved your pitiful request,
That you but only begged a last farewell,
He fetched an inward groan, and every time
I named you, sighed, as if his heart were breaking,
But shunned my eyes, and guiltily looked down;
He seemed not now that awful Antony,
Who shook an armed assembly with his nod;
But, making show as he would rub his eyes,
Disguised and blotted out a falling tear.

CLEOPATRA. Did he then weep? And was I worth a tear?
If what thou hast to say be not as pleasing,
Tell me no more, but let me die contented.

CHARMION. He bid me say, he knew himself so well,
He could deny you nothing, if he saw you;
And therefore—

CLEOPATRA. Thou wouldst say, he would not see me?

CHARMION. And therefore begged you not to use a power,
Which he could ill resist; yet he should ever
Respect you as he ought.

CLEOPATRA. Is that a word
For Antony to use to Cleopatra?
Oh, that faint word, respect! how I disdain it!
Disdain myself, for loving after it!
He should have kept that word for cold Octavia;
Respect is for a wife; am I that thing,
That dull, insipid lump, without desires,
And without power to give 'em?

ALEXAS. You misjudge;
You see through love, and that deludes your sight,
As what is straight seems crooked through the water;

But I, who bear my reason undisturbed,
Can see this Antony, this dreaded man,
A fearful[1] slave, who fain would run away,
And shuns his master's eyes; if you pursue him,
My life on't, he still drags a chain along,
That needs must clog his flight.

CLEOPATRA. Could I believe thee!—

ALEXAS. By every circumstance I know he loves.
True, he's hard pressed, by interest and by honor;
Yet he but doubts, and parleys and casts out
Many a long look for succor.

CLEOPATRA. He sends word,
He fears to see my face.

ALEXAS. And would you more?
He shows his weakness who declines the combat,
And you must urge your fortune. Could he speak
More plainly? To my ears, the message sounds —
"Come to my rescue, Cleopatra, come;
Come, free me from Ventidius; from my tyrant;
See me, and give me a pretense to leave him!"—
I hear his trumpets. This way he must pass.
Please you, retire a while; I'll work him first,
That he may bend more easy.

CLEOPATRA. You shall rule me;
But all, I fear, in vain.

[*Exit with* CHARMION *and* IRAS.]

ALEXAS. I fear so too;
Though I concealed my thoughts, to make her bold;
But 'tis our utmost means, and fate befriend it! [*Withdraws.*]

[*Enter* Lictors *with fasces; one bearing the eagle; then enter* ANTONY *with* VENTIDIUS, *followed by other* Commanders.]

ANTONY. Octavius is the minion of blind chance,
But holds from virtue nothing.

[1] timid.

VENTIDIUS. Has he courage?[1]

ANTONY. But just enough to season him from coward.
Oh, 'tis the coldest youth upon a charge,
The most deliberate fighter! if he ventures
(As in Illyria once they say he did
To storm a town), 'tis when he cannot choose,
When all the world have fixed their eyes upon him;
And then he lives on that for seven years after;
But at a close[2] revenge he never fails.

VENTIDIUS. I heard you challenged him.

ANTONY. I did, Ventidius.
What think'st thou was his answer? 'Twas so tame! —
He said, he had more ways than one to die;
I had not.

VENTIDIUS. Poor!

ANTONY. He has more ways than one;
But he would choose 'em all before that one.

VENTIDIUS. He first would choose an ague or a fever.

ANTONY. No; it must be an ague, not a fever;
He has not warmth enough to die by that.

VENTIDIUS. Or old age and a bed.

ANTONY. Aye, there's his choice.
He would live, like a lamp, to the last wink,
And crawl upon the utmost verge of life;
O Hercules! Why should a man like this,
Who dares not trust his fate for one great action,
Be all the care of Heav'n? Why should he lord it
O'er fourscore thousand men, of whom each one
Is braver than himself?

VENTIDIUS. You conquered for him;
Philippi knows it; there you shared with him
That empire which your sword made all your own.

[1] Regarded as a satiric reference to Louis XIV, whose European wars had begun in 1672.

[2] secret.

ANTONY. Fool that I was, upon my eagle's wings
I bore this wren,[1] till I was tired with soaring,
And now he mounts above me.
Good Heav'ns, is this,— is this the man who braves me?
Who bids my age make way, drives me before him,
To the world's ridge, and sweeps me off like rubbish?

VENTIDIUS. Sir, we lose time; the troops are mounted all.

ANTONY. Then give the word to march;
I long to leave this prison of a town,
To join thy legions, and in open field
Once more to show my face. Lead, my deliverer.

[*Enter* ALEXAS.]

ALEXAS. Great emperor,
In mighty arms renowned above mankind,
But, in soft pity to th'oppressed a god:
This message sends the mournful Cleopatra
To her departing lord.

VENTIDIUS. Smooth sycophant!

ALEXAS. A thousand wishes, and ten thousand prayers,
Millions of blessings wait you to the wars;
Millions of sighs and tears she sends you too,
And would have sent
As many dear embraces to your arms,
As many parting kisses to your lips;
But those, she fears, have wearied you already.

VENTIDIUS. [*Aside*] False crocodile!

ALEXAS. And yet she begs not now, you would not leave her;
That were a wish too mighty for her hopes,
Too presuming
For her low fortune, and your ebbing love;
That were a wish for her more prosp'rous days,
Her blooming beauty, and your growing kindness.

[1] In the fable the wren surpasses the eagle by rising concealed in his feathers and then flying above him.

ANTONY. [*Aside*] Well, I must man it out: — what would the queen?

ALEXAS. First, to these noble warriors, who attend
Your daring courage in the chase of fame
(Too daring, and too dang'rous for her quiet),
She humbly recommends all she holds dear,
All her own cares and fears — the care of you.

VENTIDIUS. Yes, witness Actium.

ANTONY. Let him speak, Ventidius.

ALEXAS. You, when his matchless valor bears him forward,
With ardor too heroic, on his foes,
Fall down, as she would do, before his feet;
Lie in his way, and stop the paths of death:
Tell him, this god is not invulnerable;
That absent Cleopatra bleeds in him;
And, that you may remember her petition,
She begs you wear these trifles, as a pawn,
Which, at your wished return, she will redeem
[*Gives jewels to the* Commanders.]
With all the wealth of Egypt;
This to the great Ventidius she presents,
Whom she can never count her enemy,
Because he loves her lord.

VENTIDIUS. Tell her, I'll none on't;
I'm not ashamed of honest poverty;
Not all the diamonds of the East can bribe
Ventidius from his faith. I hope to see
These and the rest of all her sparkling store,
Where they shall more deservingly be placed.

ANTONY. And who must wear 'em then?

VENTIDIUS. The wronged Octavia.

ANTONY. You might have spared that word.

VENTIDIUS. And he that bribe.

ANTONY. But have I no remembrance?

ALEXAS. Yes, a dear one;
Your slave the queen —
ANTONY. My mistress.
ALEXAS. Then your mistress;
Your mistress would, she says, have sent her soul,
But that you had long since; she humbly begs
This ruby bracelet, set with bleeding hearts
(The emblems of her own), may bind your arm.
[*Presenting a bracelet*]
VENTIDIUS. Now, my best lord, in honor's name, I ask you,
For manhood's sake and for your own dear safety,
Touch not these poisoned gifts,
Infected by the sender; touch 'em not;
Myriads of bluest plagues lie underneath 'em,
And more than aconite has dipped the silk.
ANTONY. Nay, now you grow too cynical, Ventidius.
A lady's favors may be worn with honor.
What, to refuse her bracelet! On my soul,
When I lie pensive in my tent alone,
'Twill pass the wakeful hours of winter nights,
To tell[1] these pretty beads upon my arm,
To count for every one a soft embrace,
A melting kiss at such and such a time,
And now and then the fury of her love,
When — And what harm's in this?
ALEXAS. None, none, my lord,
But what's to her, that now 'tis past forever.
ANTONY. [*Going to tie it*] We soldiers are so awkward — help me tie it.
ALEXAS. In faith, my lord, we courtiers, too, are awkward
In these affairs; so are all men indeed;
E'en I, who am not one. But shall I speak?
ANTONY. Yes, freely.

[1] count.

ALEXAS. Then, my lord, fair hands alone
Are fit to tie it; she who sent it can.
VENTIDIUS. Hell, death! this eunuch pander ruins you.
You will not see her?
[ALEXAS *whispers an* Attendant, *who goes out.*]
ANTONY. But to take my leave.
VENTIDIUS. Then I have washed an Ethiop. Y'are undone;
Y'are in the toils; y'are taken; y'are destroyed;
Her eyes do Cæsar's work.
ANTONY. You fear too soon.
I'm constant to myself: I know my strength;
And yet she shall not think me barbarous neither,
Born in the depths of Afric'; I'm a Roman,
Bred in the rules of soft humanity.
A guest, and kindly used, should bid farewell.
VENTIDIUS. You do not know
How weak you are to her, how much an infant;
You are not proof against a smile or glance;
A sigh will quite disarm you.
ANTONY. See, she comes!
Now you shall find your error. Gods, I thank you;
I formed[1] the danger greater than it was,
And now 'tis near, 'tis lessened.
VENTIDIUS. Mark the end yet.

[*Enter* CLEOPATRA, CHARMION, *and* IRAS.]

ANTONY. Well, madam, we are met.
CLEOPATRA. Is this a meeting?
Then we must part?
ANTONY. We must.
CLEOPATRA. Who says we must?
ANTONY. Our own hard fates.
CLEOPATRA. We make those fates ourselves.

[1] imagined.

ANTONY. Yes, we have made 'em; we have loved each other
Into our mutual ruin.

CLEOPATRA. The gods have seen my joys with envious eyes;
I have no friends in heav'n; and all the world
(As 'twere the bus'ness of mankind to part us)
Is armed against my love; e'en you yourself
Join with the rest; you, you are armed against me.

ANTONY. I will be justified in all I do
To late posterity, and therefore hear me.
If I mix a lie
With any truth, reproach me freely with it;
Else favor me with silence.

CLEOPATRA. You command me,
And I am dumb.

VENTIDIUS. I like this well; he shows authority.

ANTONY. That I derive my ruin
From you alone —

CLEOPATRA. O heav'ns! I ruin you!

ANTONY. You promised me your silence, and you break it
Ere I have scarce begun.

CLEOPATRA. Well, I obey you.

ANTONY. When I beheld you first, it was in Egypt,
Ere Cæsar saw your eyes; you gave me love,
And were too young to know it; that I settled
Your father in his throne, was for your sake;
I left th'acknowledgment for time to ripen.
Cæsar stepped in, and, with a greedy hand,
Plucked the green fruit, ere the first blush of red,
Yet cleaving to the bough. He was my lord,
And was, beside, too great for me to rival;
But I deserved you first, though he enjoyed you.
When, after, I beheld you in Cilicia,
An enemy to Rome, I pardoned you.

CLEOPATRA. I cleared myself —

ANTONY. Again you break your promise.

I loved you still, and took your weak excuses,
Took you into my bosom, stained by Cæsar,
And not half mine; I went to Egypt with you,
And hid me from the bus'ness of the world,
Shut out inquiring nations from my sight,
To give whole years to you.

VENTIDIUS. [*Aside*] Yes, to your shame be't spoken.

ANTONY. How I loved,
Witness, ye days and nights, and all ye hours,
That danced away with down upon your feet,
As all your bus'ness were to count my passion!
One day passed by, and nothing saw but love;
Another came, and still 'twas only love;
The suns were wearied out with looking on,
And I untired with loving.
I saw you every day, and all the day;
And every day was still but as the first,
So eager was I still to see you more.

VENTIDIUS. 'Tis all too true.

ANTONY. Fulvia, my wife, grew jealous,
As she indeed had reason; raised a war
In Italy, to call me back.

VENTIDIUS. But yet
You went not.

ANTONY. While within your arms I lay,
The world fell mold'ring from my hands each hour,
And left me scarce a grasp (I thank your love for't).

VENTIDIUS. Well pushed: that last was home.[1]

CLEOPATRA. Yet may I speak?

ANTONY. If I have urged a falsehood, yes; else not.
Your silence says I have not. Fulvia died
(Pardon, you gods, with my unkindness died);
To set the world at peace, I took Octavia,
This Cæsar's sister; in her pride of youth

[1] home thrust (*as in fencing*).

And flower of beauty did I wed that lady,
Whom blushing I must praise, because I left her.
You called; my love obeyed the fatal summons;
This raised the Roman arms; the cause was yours.
I would have fought by land, where I was stronger;
You hindered it; yet, when I fought at sea,
Forsook me fighting; and (O stain to honor!
O lasting shame!) I knew not that I fled;
But fled to follow you.

VENTIDIUS. What haste she made to hoist her purple sails!
And, to appear magnificent in flight,
Drew half our strength away.

ANTONY. All this you caused.
And would you multiply more ruins on me?
This honest man, my best, my only friend,
Has gathered up the shipwreck of my fortunes;
Twelve legions I have left, my last recruits.
And you have watched the news, and bring your eyes
To seize them too. If you have aught to answer,
Now speak, you have free leave.

ALEXAS. [*Aside*] She stands confounded;
Despair is in her eyes.

VENTIDIUS. Now lay a sigh i'th'way to stop his passage:
Prepare a tear, and bid it for his legions;
'Tis like they shall be sold.

CLEOPATRA. How shall I plead my cause, when you, my judge,
Already have condemned me? Shall I bring
The love you bore me for my advocate?
That now is turned against me, that destroys me;
For love, once past, is at the best forgotten;
But oft'ner sours to hate; 'twill please my lord
To ruin me, and therefore I'll be guilty.
But could I once have thought it would have pleased you,
That you would pry with narrow searching eyes

Into my faults, severe to my destruction,
And watching all advantages with care
That serve to make me wretched? Speak, my lord,
For I end here. Though I deserve this usage,
Was it like you to give it?

ANTONY. Oh, you wrong me,
To think I sought this parting, or desired
To accuse you more than what will clear myself,
And justify this breach.

CLEOPATRA. Thus low I thank you.
And, since my innocence will not offend,
I shall not blush to own it.

VENTIDIUS. After this,
I think she'll blush at nothing.

CLEOPATRA. You seem grieved
(And therein you are kind) that Cæsar first
Enjoyed my love, though you deserved it better;
I grieve for that, my lord, much more than you;
For, had I first been yours, it would have saved
My second choice: I never had been his,
And ne'er had been but yours. But Cæsar first,
You say, possessed my love. Not so, my lord;
He first possessed my person; you, my love:
Cæsar loved me; but I loved Antony.
If I endured him after, 'twas because
I judged it due to the first name of men;
And, half constrained, I gave, as to a tyrant,
What he would take by force.

VENTIDIUS. O Siren! Siren!
Yet grant that all the love she boasts were true,
Has she not ruined you? I still urge that,
The fatal consequence.

CLEOPATRA. The consequence indeed,
For I dare challenge him, my greatest foe,
To say it was designed; 'tis true, I loved you,

And kept you far from an uneasy wife —
Such Fulvia was.
Yes, but he'll say, you left Octavia for me;—
And can you blame me to receive that love,
Which quitted such desert for worthless me?
How often have I wished some other Cæsar,
Great as the first, and as the second young,
Would court my love, to be refused for you!

VENTIDIUS. Words, words; but Actium, sir; remember Actium.

CLEOPATRA. E'en there, I dare his malice. True I counseled
To fight at sea; but I betrayed you not.
I fled, but not to the enemy. 'Twas fear;
Would I had been a man, not to have feared!
For none would then have envied me your friendship,
Who envy me your love.

ANTONY. We're both unhappy;
If nothing else, yet our ill fortune parts us.
Speak; would you have me perish by my stay?

CLEOPATRA. If as a friend you ask my judgment, go;
If, as a lover, stay. If you must perish —
'Tis a hard word — but stay.

VENTIDIUS. See now th'effects of her so boasted love!
She strives to drag you down to ruin with her;
But could she scape without you, oh, how soon
Would she let go her hold, and haste to shore,
And never look behind!

CLEOPATRA. Then judge my love by this.

[*Giving* ANTONY *a writing*]

Could I have borne
A life or death, a happiness or woe,
From yours divided, this had giv'n me means.

ANTONY. By Hercules, the writing of Octavius!
I know it well: 'tis that proscribing[1] hand,
Young as it was, that led the way to mine,

[1] Condemning Roman citizens to death and confiscating their goods.

And left me but the second place in murder.—
See, see, Ventidius! here he offers Egypt,
And joins all Syria to it, as a present,
So, in requital, she forsake my fortunes,
And join her arms with his.

CLEOPATRA. And yet you leave me!
You leave me, Antony; and yet I love you,
Indeed I do: I have refused a kingdom;
That's a trifle;
For I could part with life, with anything,
But only you. Oh, let me die but with you!
Is that a hard request?

ANTONY. Next living with you.
'Tis all that heav'n can give.

ALEXAS. [*Aside*] He melts; we conquer.

CLEOPATRA. No; you shall go; your int'rest calls you hence;
Yes; your dear interest pulls too strong for these
Weak arms to hold you here.— [*Takes his hand.*] Go; leave me, soldier
(For you're no more a lover); leave me dying;
Push me all pale and panting from your bosom,
And, when your march begins, let one run after,
Breathless almost for joy, and cry, "She's dead":
The soldiers shout; you then, perhaps, may sigh,
And muster all your Roman gravity:
Ventidius chides; and straight your brow clears up,
As I had never been.

ANTONY. Gods, 'tis too much; too much for man to bear!

CLEOPATRA. What is't for me then,
A weak, forsaken woman, and a lover? —
Here let me breathe my last: envy me not
This minute in your arms: I'll die apace,
As fast as ere I can, and end your trouble.

ANTONY. Die! Rather let me perish; — loosened nature
Leap from its hinges, sink the props of heaven,

And fall the skies to crush the nether world!
My eyes, my soul, my all!

[*Embraces her.*]

VENTIDIUS. And what's this toy,
In balance with your fortune, honor, fame?

ANTONY. What is't, Ventidius?— it outweighs 'em all;
Why, we have more than conquered Cæsar now:
My queen's not only innocent, but loves me.
This, this is she who drags me down to ruin!
"But, could she 'scape without me, with what haste
Would she let slip her hold, and make to shore,
And never look behind!"
Down on thy knees, blasphemer as thou art,
And ask forgiveness of wronged innocence.

VENTIDIUS. I'll rather die than take it. Will you go?

ANTONY. Go! whither? Go from all that's excellent?
Faith, honor, virtue, all good things forbid
That I should go from her, who sets my love
Above the price of kingdoms! Give, you gods,
Give to your boy, your Cæsar,
This rattle of a globe to play withal,
This gewgaw world, and put him cheaply off:
I'll not be pleased with less than Cleopatra.

CLEOPATRA. She's wholly yours. My heart's so full of joy,
That I shall do some wild extravagance
Of love in public; and the foolish world,
Which knows not tenderness, will think me mad.

VENTIDIUS. O women! women! women! all the gods
Have not such power of doing good to man,
As you of doing harm. [*Exit.*]

ANTONY. Our men are armed.
Unbar the gate that looks to Cæsar's camp;
I would revenge the treachery he meant me;
And long security makes conquest easy.
I'm eager to return before I go;

For all the pleasures I have known beat thick
On my remembrance; how I long for night!
That both the sweets of mutual love may try,
And once triumph o'er Cæsar ere we die. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT III

[*At one door enter* CLEOPATRA, CHARMION, IRAS, *and* ALEXAS, *a train of Egyptians; at the other,* ANTONY *and Romans. The entrance on both sides is prepared by music; the trumpets just sounding on* ANTONY'S *part: then answered by timbrels, etc., on* CLEOPATRA'S. CHARMION *and* IRAS *hold a laurel wreath betwixt them. A dance of Egyptians. After the ceremony,* CLEOPATRA *crowns* ANTONY.]

ANTONY. I thought how those white arms would fold me in,
And strain me close, and melt me into love;
So pleased with that sweet image, I sprung forwards,
And added all my strength to every blow.

CLEOPATRA. Come to me, come, my soldier, to my arms!
You've been too long away from my embraces;
But when I have you fast and all my own,
With broken murmurs, and with amorous sighs,
I'll say, you were unkind, and punish you,
And mark you red with many an eager kiss.

ANTONY. My brighter Venus!

CLEOPATRA. O my greater Mars!

ANTONY. Thou join'st us well, my love!
Suppose me come from the Phlegræan plains,[1]
Where gasping giants lay, cleft by my sword,
And mountain tops, pared off each other blow,
To bury those I slew; receive me, goddess!
Let Cæsar spread his subtle nets[2] like Vulcan;

[1] In Macedonia, where the giants battled unsuccessfully against the gods.

[2] Mars and Venus were caught in a net by Vulcan.

In thy embraces I would be beheld
By heav'n and earth at once,
And make their envy what they meant their sport.
Let those who took us blush; I would love on
With awful state, regardless of their frowns,
As their superior god.
There's no satiety of love in thee:
Enjoyed, thou still art new; perpetual spring
Is in thy arms; the ripened fruit but falls,
And blossoms rise to fill its empty place;
And I grow rich by giving.

[*Enter* VENTIDIUS, *and stands apart.*]

ALEXAS. Oh, now the danger's past, your general comes!
He joins not in your joys, nor minds your triumphs;
But with contracted brows looks frowning on,
As envying your success.

ANTONY. Now, on my soul, he loves me; truly loves me:
He never flattered me in any vice,
But awes me with his virtue: e'en this minute,
Methinks, he has a right of chiding me.
Lead to the temple; I'll avoid his presence;
It checks too strong upon me.

[*Exeunt the rest. As* ANTONY *is going,* VENTIDIUS *pulls him by the robe.*]

VENTIDIUS. Emperor!

ANTONY. [*Looking back*] 'Tis the old argument; I prithee, spare me.

VENTIDIUS. But this one hearing, emperor.

ANTONY. Let go
My robe; or, by my father Hercules[1]—

VENTIDIUS. By Hercules his[2] father, that's yet greater,
I bring you somewhat you would wish to know.

[1] Plutarch traced Antony's descent from Hercules.
[2] Old genitive; means "Hercules'."

ANTONY. Thou see'st we are observed, attend me here,
And I'll return. [*Exit.*]

VENTIDIUS. I'm waning in his favor, yet I love him;
I love this man, who runs to meet his ruin;
And sure the gods, like me, are fond of him;
His virtues lie so mingled with his crimes,
As would confound their choice to punish one,
And not reward the other.

[*Enter* ANTONY.]

ANTONY. We can conquer,
You see, without your aid.
We have dislodged their troops;
They look on us at distance, and, like curs
Scaped from the lion's paws, they bay far off,
And lick their wounds and faintly threaten war.
Five thousand Romans, with their faces upward,
Lie breathless on the plain.

VENTIDIUS. 'Tis well; and he
Who lost 'em, could have spared ten thousand more.
Yet if by this advantage you could gain
An easier peace, while Cæsar doubts the chance
Of arms —

ANTONY. Oh, think not on't, Ventidius!
The boy pursues my ruin, he'll no peace;
His malice is considerate in advantage.
Oh, he's the coolest murderer! so stanch,
He kills and keeps his temper.

VENTIDIUS. Have you no friend
In all his army, who has power to move him?
Mecænas or Agrippa might do much.

ANTONY. They're both too deep in Cæsar's interests.
We'll work it out by dint of sword, or perish.

VENTIDIUS. Fain I would find some other.

ANTONY. Thank thy love.

Some four or five such victories as this
Will save thy farther pains.

VENTIDIUS. Expect no more; Cæsar is on his guard:
I know, sir, you have conquered against odds;
But still you draw supplies from one poor town,
And of Egyptians; he has all the world,
And at his back nations come pouring in,
To fill the gaps you make. Pray, think again.

ANTONY. Why dost thou drive me from myself, to search
For foreign aids?— to hunt my memory,
And range all o'er a waste and barren place,
To find a friend? The wretched have no friends.
Yet I had one, the bravest youth of Rome,
Whom Cæsar loves beyond the love of women;
He could resolve his mind as fire does wax,
From that hard rugged image melt him down,
And mold him in what softer form he pleased.

VENTIDIUS. Him would I see; that man of all the world;
Just such a one we want.

ANTONY. He loved me too;
I was his soul; he lived not but in me:
We were so closed within each other's breasts,
The rivets were not found that joined us first.
That does not reach us yet: we were so mixed
As meeting streams, both to ourselves were lost;
We were one mass; we could not give or take
But from the same; for he was I, I he.

VENTIDIUS. [*Aside*] He moves as I would wish him.

ANTONY. After this,
I need not tell his name;— 'twas Dollabella.

VENTIDIUS. He's now in Cæsar's camp.

ANTONY. No matter where,
Since he's no longer mine. He took unkindly
That I forbade him Cleopatra's sight
Because I feared he loved her: he confessed

He had a warmth, which for my sake he stifled;
For 'twere impossible that two, so one,
Should not have loved the same. When he departed,
He took no leave; and that confirmed my thoughts.

VENTIDIUS. It argues that he loved you more than her,
Else he had stayed; but he perceived you jealous,
And would not grieve his friend; I know he loves you.

ANTONY. I should have seen him then ere now.

VENTIDIUS. Perhaps
He has thus long been lab'ring for your peace.

ANTONY. Would he were here!

VENTIDIUS. Would you believe he loved you?
I read your answer in your eyes, you would.
Not to conceal it longer, he has sent
A messenger from Cæsar's camp, with letters.

ANTONY. Let him appear.

VENTIDIUS. I'll bring him instantly.

[*Exit* VENTIDIUS; *reënters immediately with* DOLLABELLA.]

ANTONY. 'Tis he himself! himself, by holy friendship!
[*Runs to embrace him.*]
Art thou returned at last, my better half?
Come, give me all my self! Let me not live,
If the young bridegroom, longing for his night,
Was ever half so fond.

DOLLABELLA. I must be silent, for my soul is busy
About a nobler work: she's new come home,
Like a long-absent man, and wanders o'er
Each room, a stranger to her own, to look
If all be safe.

ANTONY. Thou hast what's left of me;
For I am now so sunk from what I was,
Thou find'st me at my lowest water-mark.
The rivers that ran in and raised my fortunes
Are all dried up, or take another course:
What I have left is from my native spring;

I've still a heart that swells in scorn of fate,
And lifts me to my banks.

DOLLABELLA. Still you are lord of all the world to me.

ANTONY. Why, then I yet am so; for thou art all.
If I had any joy when thou wert absent,
I grudged it to myself; methought I robbed
Thee of thy part. But, oh, my Dollabella!
Thou hast beheld me other than I am.
Hast thou not seen my morning chambers[1] filled
With sceptered slaves who waited to salute me?
With eastern monarchs who forgot the sun
To worship my uprising? Menial kings
Ran coursing up and down my palace yard,
Stood silent in my presence, watched my eyes,
And at my least command all started out,
Like racers to the goal.

DOLLABELLA. Slaves to your fortune.

ANTONY. Fortune is Cæsar's now; and what am I?

VENTIDIUS. What you have made yourself; I will not flatter.

ANTONY. Is this friendly done?

DOLLABELLA. Yes; when his end is so, I must join with him;
Indeed I must, and yet you must not chide;
Why am I else your friend?

ANTONY. Take heed, young man,
How thou upbraid'st my love; the queen has eyes,
And thou, too, hast a soul. Canst thou remember,
When, swelled with hatred, thou beheld'st her first,
As accessory to thy brother's death?

DOLLABELLA. Spare my remembrance; 'twas a guilty day,
And still the blush hangs here.

ANTONY. To clear herself,
For sending him no aid, she came from Egypt.
Her galley down the silver Cydnos rowed;
The tackling silk, the streamers waved with gold;

[1] my chambers in the morning.

The gentle winds were lodged in purple sails;
Her nymphs, like Nereids, round her couch were placed,
Where she, another sea-born Venus, lay.

DOLLABELLA. No more; I would not hear it.

ANTONY. Oh, you must!

She lay, and leaned her cheek upon her hand
And cast a look so languishingly sweet,
As if, secure of all beholders' hearts,
Neglecting, she could take 'em: boys, like Cupids,
Stood fanning with their painted wings the winds
That played about her face; but if she smiled,
A darting glory seemed to blaze abroad,
That men's desiring eyes were never wearied,
But hung upon the object; to soft flutes
The silver oars kept time; and while they played,
The hearing gave new pleasure to the sight;
And both to thought; 'twas heaven, or somewhat more;
For she so charmed all hearts that gazing crowds
Stood panting on the shore, and wanted breath
To give their welcome voice.
Then, Dollabella, where was then thy soul?
Was not thy fury quite disarmed with wonder?
Didst thou not shrink behind me from those eyes,
And whisper in my ear, "Oh, tell her not
That I accused her with my brother's death?"

DOLLABELLA. And should my weakness be a plea for yours?

Mine was an age when love might be excused,
When kindly warmth, and when my springing youth
Made it a debt to nature. Yours —

VENTIDIUS. Speak boldly.

Yours, he would say, in your declining age,
When no more heat was left but what you forced,
When all the sap was needful for the trunk,
When it went down, then you constrained the course,

And robbed from nature, to supply desire;
In you (I would not use so harsh a word)
But 'tis plain dotage.
ANTONY. Ha!
DOLLABELLA. 'Twas urged too home.
But yet the loss was private that I made;
'Twas but myself I lost: I lost no legions;
I had no world to lose, no people's love.
ANTONY. This from a friend?
DOLLABELLA. Yes, Antony, a true one;
A friend so tender that each word I speak
Stabs my own heart before it reach your ear.
Oh, judge me not less kind, because I chide!
To Cæsar I excuse you.
ANTONY. O ye gods!
Have I then lived to be excused to Cæsar?
DOLLABELLA. As to your equal.
ANTONY. Well, he's but my equal:
While I wear this[1] he never shall be more.
DOLLABELLA. I bring conditions from him.
ANTONY. Are they noble?
Methinks thou shouldst not bring 'em else; yet he
Is full of deep dissembling; knows no honor
Divided from his int'rest. Fate mistook him;
For nature meant him for an usurer:
He's fit indeed to buy, not conquer kingdoms.
VENTIDIUS. Then, granting this,
What power was theirs, who wrought so hard a temper
To honorable terms?
ANTONY. It was my Dollabella, or some god.
DOLLABELLA. Nor I, nor yet Mæcenas, nor Agrippa:
They were your enemies; and I, a friend
Too weak alone; yet 'twas a Roman's deed.
ANTONY. 'Twas like a Roman done; show me that man,

[1] His sword, or perhaps his head.

Who has preserved my life, my love, my honor;
Let me see but his face.
VENTIDIUS. That task is mine,
And, Heav'n, thou know'st how pleasing. [*Exit* VENTIDIUS.]
DOLLABELLA. You'll remember
To whom you stand obliged?
ANTONY. When I forget it,
Be thou unkind; and that's my greatest curse.
My queen shall thank him too.
DOLLABELLA. I fear she will not.
ANTONY. But she shall do't. The queen, my Dollabella!
Hast thou not still some grudgings of thy fever?
DOLLABELLA. I would not see her lost.
ANTONY. When I forsake her,
Leave me, my better stars! for she has truth
Beyond her beauty. Cæsar tempted her,
At no less price than kingdoms, to betray me;
But she resisted all; and yet thou chid'st me
For loving her too well. Could I do so?
DOLLABELLA. Yes; there's my reason.

[*Reënter* VENTIDIUS, *with* OCTAVIA, *leading* ANTONY'S *two little daughters.*]

ANTONY. Where?—Octavia there!
[*Starting back*]

VENTIDIUS. What, is she poison to you? a disease?
Look on her, view her well, and those she brings:
Are they all strangers to your eyes? Has nature
No secret call, no whisper they are yours?
DOLLABELLA. For shame, my lord, if not for love, receive 'em
With kinder eyes. If you confess a man,[1]
Meet 'em, embrace 'em, bid 'em welcome to you.
Your arms should open, e'en without your knowledge,
To clasp 'em in; your feet should turn to wings,

[1] confess yourself to be a man.

To bear you to 'em; and your eyes dart out
And aim a kiss, ere you could reach the lips.
ANTONY. I stood amazed, to think how they came hither.
VENTIDIUS. I sent for 'em; I brought 'em in, unknown
To Cleopatra's guards.
DOLLABELLA. Yet are you cold?
OCTAVIA. Thus long I have attended for my welcome;
Which, as a stranger, sure I might expect.
Who am I?
ANTONY. Cæsar's sister.
OCTAVIA. That's unkind.
Had I been nothing more than Cæsar's sister,
Know, I had still remained in Cæsar's camp:
But your Octavia, your much injured wife,
Though banish'd from your bed, driv'n from your house,
In spite of Cæsar's sister, still is yours.
'Tis true, I have a heart disdains your coldness,
And prompts me not to seek what you should offer,
But a wife's virtue still surmounts that pride;
I come to claim you as my own: to show
My duty first; to ask, nay beg, your kindness:
Your hand, my lord; 'tis mine, and I will have it.
[*Taking his hand*]
VENTIDIUS. Do, take it; thou deserv'st it.
DOLLABELLA. On my soul,
And so she does: she's neither too submissive,
Nor yet too haughty; but so just a mean
Shows, as it ought, a wife and Roman too.
ANTONY. I fear, Octavia, you have begged my life.
OCTAVIA. Begged it, my lord?
ANTONY. Yes, begged it, my ambassadress;
Poorly and basely begged it of your brother.
OCTAVIA. Poorly and basely I could never beg;
Nor could my brother grant.
ANTONY. Shall I, who to my kneeling slave could say,

"Rise up, and be a king," shall I fall down
And cry, "Forgive me, Cæsar?" Shall I set
A man, my equal, in the place of Jove,
As he could give me being? No; that word,
"Forgive," would choke me up,
And die upon my tongue.

DOLLABELLA. You shall not need it.

ANTONY. I will not need it. Come, you've all betrayed me,—
My friend too!—to receive some vile conditions.
My wife has bought me with her prayers and tears,
And now I must become her branded slave:
In every peevish mood she will upbraid
The life she gave: if I but look awry,
She cries, "I'll tell my brother."

OCTAVIA. My hard fortune
Subjects me still to your unkind mistakes.
But the conditions I have brought are such
You need not blush to take; I love your honor,
Because 'tis mine; it never shall be said,
Octavia's husband was her brother's slave.
Sir, you are free; free, e'en from her you loathe;
For, though my brother bargains for your love,
Makes me the price and cement of your peace,
I have a soul like yours; I cannot take
Your love as alms, nor beg what I deserve.
I'll tell my brother we are reconciled;
He shall draw back his troops, and you shall march
To rule the East; I may be dropped at Athens,
No matter where; I never will complain,
But only keep the barren name of wife,
And rid you of the trouble.

VENTIDIUS. Was ever such a strife of sullen honor!
Both scorn to be obliged.

DOLLABELLA. Oh, she has touched him in the tender'st part;

See how he reddens with despite and shame,
To be outdone in generosity!
VENTIDIUS. See how he winks! how he dries up a tear,
That fain would fall!
ANTONY. Octavia, I have heard you, and must praise
The greatness of your soul,
But cannot yield to what you have proposed:
For I can ne'er be conquered but by love;
And you do all for duty. You would free me,
And would be dropped at Athens; was't not so?
OCTAVIA. It was, my lord.
ANTONY. Then I must be obliged
To one who loves me not; who to herself
May call me thankless and ungrateful man: —
I'll not endure it; no.
VENTIDIUS. [*Aside*] I am glad it pinches there.
OCTAVIA. Would you triumph o'er poor Octavia's virtue?
That pride was all I had to bear me up;
That you might think you owed me for your life,
And owed it to my duty, not my love.
I have been injured, and my haughty soul
Could brook but ill the man who slights my bed.
ANTONY. Therefore you love me not.
OCTAVIA. Therefore, my lord,
I should not love you.
ANTONY. Therefore you would leave me?
OCTAVIA. And therefore I should leave you — if I could.
DOLLABELLA. Her soul's too great, after such injuries,
To say she loves; and yet she lets you see it.
Her modesty and silence plead her cause.
ANTONY. O Dollabella, which way shall I turn?
I find a secret yielding in my soul;
But Cleopatra, who would die with me,
Must she be left? Pity pleads for Octavia;
But does it not plead more for Cleopatra?

VENTIDIUS. Justice and pity both plead for Octavia;
For Cleopatra, neither.
One would be ruined with you; but she first
Had ruined you; the other, you have ruined,
And yet she would preserve you.
In everything their merits are unequal.
ANTONY. O my distracted soul!
OCTAVIA. Sweet Heav'n compose it!—
Come, come my lord, if I can pardon you,
Methinks you should accept it. Look on these;
Are they not yours? Or stand they thus neglected
As they are mine? Go to him, children, go;
Kneel to him, take him by the hand, speak to him;
For you may speak, and he may own you too,
Without a blush; and so he cannot all
His children: go, I say, and pull him to me,
And pull him to yourselves, from that bad woman.
You, Agrippina, hang upon his arms;
And you, Antonia, clasp about his waist:
If he will shake you off, if he will dash you
Against the pavement, you must bear it, children;
For you are mine, and I was born to suffer.
[*Here the* Children *go to him, etc.*]
VENTIDIUS. Was ever sight so moving? — Emperor!
DOLLABELLA. Friend!
OCTAVIA. Husband!
BOTH CHILDREN. Father!
ANTONY. I am vanquished; take me,
Octavia; take me, children; share me all. [*Embracing them*]
I've been a thriftless debtor to your loves,
And run out much, in riot, from your stock;
But all shall be amended.
OCTAVIA. O blest hour!
DOLLABELLA. O happy change!
VENTIDIUS. My joy stops at my tongue;

But it has found two channels here for one,
And bubbles out above.

ANTONY. [*To* OCTAVIA] This is thy triumph; lead me where thou wilt;
E'en to thy brother's camp.

OCTAVIA. All there are yours.

[*Enter* ALEXAS *hastily.*]

ALEXAS. The queen, my mistress, sir, and yours —

ANTONY. 'Tis past.—
Octavia, you shall stay this night; to-morrow
Cæsar and we are one.

[*Exit leading* OCTAVIA; DOLLABELLA *and the* Children *follow.*]

VENTIDIUS. There's news for you; run, my officious eunuch,
Be sure to be the first; haste forward:
Haste, my dear eunuch, haste. [*Exit.*]

ALEXAS. This downright fighting fool, this thick-skulled hero,
This blunt, unthinking instrument of death,
With plain dull virtue has outgone my wit.
Pleasure forsook my earli'st infancy;
The luxury of others robbed my cradle,
And ravished thence the promise of a man;
Cast out from nature, disinherited
Of what her meanest children claim by kind,[1]
Yet greatness kept me from contempt; that's gone.
Had Cleopatra followed my advice,
Then he had been betrayed who now forsakes.
She dies for love; but she has known its joys:
Gods, is this just, that I, who know no joys,
Must die because she loves?

[*Enter* CLEOPATRA, CHARMION, IRAS, *and train.*]

O madam, I have seen what blasts my eyes!
Octavia's here!

[1] by nature.

CLEOPATRA. Peace with that raven's note.
I know it too; and now am in
The pangs of death.
ALEXAS. You are no more a queen;
Egypt is lost.
CLEOPATRA. What tell'st thou me of Egypt?
My life, my soul is lost! Octavia has him!
O fatal name to Cleopatra's love!
My kisses, my embraces, now are hers;
While I — But thou hast seen my rival; speak,
Does she deserve this blessing? Is she fair?
Bright as a goddess? And is all perfection
Confined to her? It is. Poor I was made
Of that coarse matter which, when she was finished,
The gods threw by for rubbish.
ALEXAS. She's indeed a very miracle.
CLEOPATRA. Death to my hopes, a miracle!
ALEXAS. [*Bowing*] A miracle;
I mean of goodness; for in beauty, madam,
You make all wonders cease.
CLEOPATRA. I was too rash:
Take this in part of recompense. [*Giving a ring*] But, oh!
I fear thou flatter'st me.
CHARMION. She comes! she's here!
IRAS. Fly, madam, Cæsar's sister!
CLEOPATRA. Were she the sister of the thund'rer Jove,
And bore her brother's lightning in her eyes,
Thus would I face my rival.

[*Meets* OCTAVIA *with* VENTIDIUS. OCTAVIA *bears up to her. Their trains*[1] *come up on either side.*]

OCTAVIA. I need not ask if you are Cleopatra;
Your haughty carriage —
CLEOPATRA. Shows I am a queen;
Nor need I ask you who you are.

[1] attendants.

OCTAVIA. A Roman;
A name that makes and can unmake a queen.
CLEOPATRA. Your lord, the man who serves me, is a Roman.
OCTAVIA. He was a Roman till he lost that name
To be a slave in Egypt; but I come
To free him thence.
CLEOPATRA. Peace, peace, my lover's Juno.
When he grew weary of that household-clog,
He chose my easier bonds.
OCTAVIA. I wonder not
Your bonds are easy: you have long been practiced
In that lascivious art: he's not the first
For whom you spread your snares: let Cæsar witness.
CLEOPATRA. I loved not Cæsar; 'twas but gratitude
I paid his love; the worst your malice can
Is but to say the greatest of mankind
Has been my slave. The next, but far above him
In my esteem, is he whom law calls yours,
But whom his love made mine.
OCTAVIA. [*Coming up close to her*] I would view nearer
That face which has so long usurped my right,
To find th'inevitable charms that catch
Mankind so sure, that ruined my dear lord.
CLEOPATRA. Oh, you do well to search; for had you known
But half these charms, you had not lost his heart.
OCTAVIA. Far be their knowledge from a Roman lady,
Far from a modest wife! Shame of our sex,
Dost thou not blush to own those black endearments,
That make sin pleasing?
CLEOPATRA. You may blush, who want 'em.
If bounteous nature, if indulgent Heav'n
Have giv'n me charms to please the bravest man,
Should I not thank 'em? Should I be ashamed,
And not be proud? I am, that he has loved me;

And, when I love not him, Heav'n change this face
For one like that.

OCTAVIA. Thou lov'st him not so well.

CLEOPATRA. I love him better, and deserve him more.

OCTAVIA. You do not; cannot; you have been his ruin.
Who made him cheap at Rome, but Cleopatra?
Who made him scorned abroad, but Cleopatra?
At Actium who betrayed him? Cleopatra.
Who made his children orphans, and poor me
A wretched widow? Only Cleopatra.

CLEOPATRA. Yet she who loves him best is Cleopatra.
If you have suffered, I have suffered more.
You bear the specious title of a wife,
To gild your cause, and draw the pitying world
To favor it; the world contemns poor me.
For I have lost my honor, lost my fame,
And stained the glory of my royal house,
And all to bear the branded name of mistress.
There wants but life, and that too I would lose
For him I love.

OCTAVIA. Be't so, then; take thy wish.

[*Exit cum suis.*[1]]

CLEOPATRA. And 'tis my wish,
Now he is lost for whom alone I lived.
My sight grows dim, and every object dances
And swims before me in the maze of death.
My spirits, while they were opposed, kept up;
They could not sink beneath a rival's scorn;
But now she's gone, they faint.

ALEXAS. Mine have had leisure
To recollect their strength, and furnish counsel
To ruin her who else must ruin you.

CLEOPATRA. Vain promiser!
Lead me, my Charmion; nay, your hand too, Iras.

[1] Exit with her own (attendants).

My grief has weight enough to sink you both.
Conduct me to some solitary chamber,
And draw the curtains round;
Then leave me to myself, to take alone
My fill of grief:
There I till death will his unkindness weep;
As harmless infants moan themselves asleep. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV

[ANTONY, DOLLABELLA]

DOLLABELLA. Why would you shift it from yourself on me?
Can you not tell her you must part?
ANTONY. I cannot.
I could pull out an eye and bid it go,
And t'other should not weep. O Dollabella,
How many deaths are in this word, "Depart"!
I dare not trust my tongue to tell her so:
One look of hers would thaw me into tears,
And I should melt till I were lost again.
DOLLABELLA. Then let Ventidius;
He's rough by nature.
ANTONY. Oh, he'll speak too harshly;
He'll kill her with the news; thou, only thou.
DOLLABELLA. Nature has cast me in so soft a mold,
That but to hear a story feigned for pleasure
Of some sad lover's death, moistens my eyes
And robs me of my manhood. I should speak
So faintly, with such fear to grieve her heart,
She'd not believe it earnest.
ANTONY. Therefore — therefore
Thou only, thou art fit; think thyself me;
And when thou speak'st (but let it first be long),
Take off the edge from every sharper sound,

And let our parting be as gently made
As other loves begin; wilt thou do this?

DOLLABELLA. What you have said so sinks into my soul,
That, if I must speak, I shall speak just so.

ANTONY. I leave you then to your sad task; farewell.
I sent her word to meet you. [*Goes to the door, comes back.*] I forgot;
Let her be told, I'll make her peace with mine:
Her crown and dignity shall be preserved,
If I have power with Cæsar.— Oh, be sure
To think on that.

DOLLABELLA. Fear not, I will remember.

[ANTONY *goes again to the door, and comes back.*]

ANTONY. And tell her, too, how much I was constrained;
I did not this but with extremest force,
Desire her not to hate my memory,
For still I cherish hers;— insist on that.

DOLLABELLA. Trust me, I'll not forget it.

ANTONY. Then that's all.

[*Goes out, and returns again.*]

Wilt thou forgive my fondness[1] this once more?
Tell her, though we shall never meet again,
If I should hear she took another love
The news would break my heart.— Now I must go;
For every time I have returned, I feel
My soul more tender; and my next command
Would be to bid her stay, and ruin both. [*Exit.*]

DOLLABELLA. Men are but children of a larger growth;
Our appetities as apt to change as theirs,
And full as craving too, and full as vain;
And yet the soul, shut up in her dark room,
Viewing so clear abroad, at home sees nothing;
But, like a mole in earth, busy and blind,
Works all her folly up, and casts it outward
To the world's open view; thus I discovered,

[1] folly.

And blamed the love of ruined Antony;
Yet wish that I were he, to be so ruined.

[*Enter* VENTIDIUS *above.*]

VENTIDIUS. Alone? and talking to himself? concerned too?
Perhaps my guess is right; he loved her once,
And may pursue it still.

DOLLABELLA. O friendship! friendship!
Ill canst thou answer this; and reason, worse:
Unfaithful in th'attempt; hopeless to win;
And if I win, undone: mere madness all.
And yet th'occasion's fair. What injury
To him, to wear the robe which he throws by!

VENTIDIUS. None, none at all. This happens as I wish,
To ruin her yet more with Antony.

[*Enter* CLEOPATRA, *talking with* ALEXAS; CHARMION *and* IRAS *on the other side.*]

DOLLABELLA. She comes! What charms has sorrow on that face!
Sorrow seems pleased to dwell with so much sweetness;
Yet, now and then, a melancholy smile
Breaks loose, like lightning in a winter's night,
And shows a moment's day.

VENTIDIUS. If she should love him too! Her eunuch there?
That porpoise[1] bodes ill weather. Draw, draw nearer,
Sweet devil, that I may hear.

ALEXAS. Believe me; try

[DOLLABELLA *goes over to* CHARMION *and* IRAS; *seems to talk with them.*]

To make him jealous; jealousy is like
A polished glass held to the lips when life's in doubt;
If there be breath, 'twill catch the damp, and show it.

CLEOPATRA. I grant you, jealousy's a proof of love,

[1] Referring to the fat Alexas; the porpoise was regarded as an omen of bad weather.

But 'tis a weak and unavailing med'cine;
It puts out the disease,[1] and makes it show,
But has no power to cure.

ALEXAS. 'Tis your last remedy, and strongest too.
And then this Dollabella, who so fit
To practice on? He's handsome, valiant, young,
And looks as he were laid for nature's bait
To catch weak women's eyes.
He stands already more than half suspected
Of loving you; the least kind word or glance
You give this youth will kindle him with love:
Then, like a burning vessel set adrift,
You'll send him down amain[2] before the wind,
To fire the heart of jealous Antony.

CLEOPATRA. Can I do this? Ah, no; my love 's so true
That I can neither hide it where it is,
Nor show it where it is not. Nature meant me
A wife; a silly, harmless, household dove,
Fond without art and kind without deceit;
But fortune, that has made a mistress of me,
[Has] thrust me out to the wide world, unfurnished
Of falsehood to be happy.

ALEXAS. Force yourself.
Th'event[3] will be, your lover will return
Doubly desirous to possess the good
Which once he feared to lose.

CLEOPATRA. I must attempt it;
But oh, with what regret!

[*Exit* ALEXAS.]

[*She comes up to* DOLLABELLA.]

VENTIDIUS. So, now the scene draws near; they're in my reach.

CLEOPATRA. [*To* DOLLABELLA] Discoursing with my women!
Might not I
Share in your entertainment?

[1] brings it to the surface. [2] in haste. [3] the outcome.

CHARMION. You have been
The subject of it, madam.
CLEOPATRA. How, and how?
IRAS. Such praises of your beauty!
CLEOPATRA. Mere poetry.
Your Roman wits, your Gallus and Tibullus,
Have taught you this from Cytheris and Delia.
DOLLABELLA. Those Roman wits have never been in Egypt;
Cytheris and Delia else had been unsung:
I, who have seen — had I been born a poet,
Should choose a nobler name.
CLEOPATRA. You flatter me.
But 'tis your nation's vice; all of your country
Are flatterers, and all false. Your friend's like you.
I'm sure, he sent you not to speak these words.
DOLLABELLA. No, madam; yet he sent me —
CLEOPATRA. Well, he sent you —
DOLLABELLA. Of a less pleasing errand.
CLEOPATRA. How less pleasing?
Less to yourself, or me?
DOLLABELLA. Madam, to both;
For you must mourn, and I must grieve to cause it.
CLEOPATRA. You, Charmion, and your fellow, stand at distance.—
[*Aside*] Hold up, my spirits. — Well, now your mournful matter;
For I'm prepared, perhaps can guess it too.
DOLLABELLA. I wish you would; for 'tis a thankless office
To tell ill news; and I, of all your sex,
Most fear displeasing you.
CLEOPATRA. Of all your sex,
I soonest could forgive you, if you should.
VENTIDIUS. Most delicate advances! Woman! woman!
Dear, damned, inconstant sex!
CLEOPATRA. In the first place,
I am to be forsaken; is't not so?

DOLLABELLA. I wish I could not answer to that question.
CLEOPATRA. Then pass it o'er, because it troubles you:
I should have been more grieved another time.
Next, I'm to lose my kingdom — Farewell, Egypt!
Yet is there any more?
DOLLABELLA. Madam, I fear
Your too deep sense of grief has turned your reason.
CLEOPATRA. No, no, I'm not run mad; I can bear fortune:
And love may be expelled by other love,
As poisons are by poisons.
DOLLABELLA. You o'erjoy me, madam,
To find your griefs so moderately borne;
You've heard the worst; all are not false like him.
CLEOPATRA. No; Heav'n forbid they should.
DOLLABELLA. Some men are constant.
CLEOPATRA. And constancy deserves reward, that's certain.
DOLLABELLA. Deserves it not; but give it leave to hope.
VENTIDIUS. I'll swear thou hast my leave. I have enough:
But how to manage this! Well, I'll consider. [*Exit.*]
DOLLABELLA. I came prepared
To tell you heavy news, news which I thought
Would fright the blood from your pale cheeks to hear;
But you have met it with a cheerfulness
That makes my task more easy; and my tongue,
Which on another's message was employed,
Would gladly speak its own.
CLEOPATRA. Hold, Dollabella.
First tell me, were you chosen by my lord?
Or sought you this employment?
DOLLABELLA. He picked me out; and, as his bosom friend,
He charged me with his words.
CLEOPATRA. The message then
I know was tender, and each accent smooth,
To mollify that rugged word, "Depart."

DOLLABELLA. Oh, you mistake; he chose the harshest words;
With fiery eyes, and with contracted brows,
He coined his face in the severest stamp;
And fury shook his fabric, like an earthquake;
He heaved for vent, and burst like bellowing Etna,
In sounds scarce human — "Hence, away forever;
Let her begone, the blot of my renown,
And bane of all my hopes!

[*All the time of this speech,* CLEOPATRA *seems more and more concerned, till she sinks quite down.*]

Let her be driv'n as far as men can think
From man's commerce! she'll poison to the center."

CLEOPATRA. Oh, I can bear no more!

DOLLABELLA. Help, help!— O wretch! O cursed, cursed wretch!
What have I done!

CHARMION. Help, chafe her temples, Iras.

IRAS. Bend, bend her forward quickly.

CHARMION. Heav'n be praised,
She comes again.

CLEOPATRA. Oh, let him not approach me.
Why have you brought me back to this loathed being,
Th'abode of falsehood, violated vows,
And injured love? For pity, let me go;
For if there be a place of long repose,
I'm sure I want it. My disdainful lord
Can never break that quiet, nor awake
The sleeping soul with hollowing in my tomb
Such words as fright her hence.— Unkind, unkind!

DOLLABELLA. [*Kneeling*] Believe me; 'tis against myself I speak;
That sure desires belief; I injured him:
My friend ne'er spoke those words. Oh, had you seen
How often he came back, and every time
With something more obliging and more kind,

To add to what he said; what dear farewells;
How almost vanquished by his love he parted
And leaned to what unwillingly he left!
I, traitor as I was, for love of you
(But what can you not do, who made me false?)
I forged that lie; for whose forgiveness kneels
This self-accused, self-punished criminal.

CLEOPATRA. With how much ease believe we what we wish!
Rise, Dollabella; if you have been guilty,
I have contributed, and too much love
Has made me guilty too.
Th'advance of kindness, which I made, was feigned,
To call back fleeting love by jealousy;
But 'twould not last. Oh, rather let me lose,
Than so ignobly trifle with his heart.

DOLLABELLA. I find your breast fenced round from human reach,
Transparent as a rock of solid crystal;
Seen through, but never pierced. My friend, my friend!
What endless treasure hast thou thrown away;
And scattered, like an infant, in the ocean,
Vain sums of wealth, which none can gather thence!

CLEOPATRA. Could you not beg
An hour's admittance to his private ear?
Like one who wanders through long barren wilds
And yet foreknows no hospitable inn
Is near to succor hunger, eats his fill
Before his painful march;
So would I feed a while my famished eyes
Before we part; for I have far to go,
If death be far, and never must return.

[VENTIDIUS *with* OCTAVIA *behind.*]

VENTIDIUS. From hence you may discover — Oh, sweet, sweet!
Would you indeed? the pretty hand in earnest?

DOLLABELLA. I will, for this reward.— [*Takes her hand.*]
Draw it not back.
'Tis all I e'er will beg.
VENTIDIUS. They turn upon us.
OCTAVIA. What quick eyes has guilt!
VENTIDIUS. Seem not to have observed 'em, and go on.

[*They enter.*]

DOLLABELLA. Saw you the emperor, Ventidius?
VENTIDIUS. No.
I sought him; but I heard that he was private,
None with him but Hipparchus, his freedman.
DOLLABELLA. Know you his bus'ness?
VENTIDIUS. Giving him instructions,
And letters to his brother Cæsar.
DOLLABELLA. Well,
He must be found.

[*Exeunt* DOLLABELLA *and* CLEOPATRA.]

OCTAVIA. Most glorious impudence!
VENTIDIUS. She looked, methought,
As she would say, "Take your old man, Octavia;
Thank you, I'm better here." Well, but what use
Make we of this discovery?
OCTAVIA. Let it die.
VENTIDIUS. I pity Dollabella; but she's dangerous:
Her eyes have power beyond Thessalian charms,
To draw the moon from heav'n; for eloquence,
The sea-green Sirens taught her voice their flatt'ry;
And while she speaks, night steals upon the day,
Unmarked of those that hear; then she's so charming,
Age buds at sight of her, and swells to youth:
The holy priests gaze on her when she smiles;
And with heaved hands, forgetting gravity,
They bless her wanton eyes; even I, who hate her,
With a malignant joy behold such beauty;

And, while I curse, desire it. Antony
Must needs have some remains of passion still,
Which may ferment into a worse relapse,
If now not fully cured. I know, this minute,
With Cæsar he's endeavoring her peace.

OCTAVIA. You have prevailed; but for a further purpose
[*Walks off.*]
I'll prove[1] how he will relish this discovery.
What, make a strumpet's peace! it swells my heart:
It must not, sha' not be.

VENTIDIUS. His guards appear.
Let me begin, and you shall second me.

[*Enter* ANTONY.]

ANTONY. Octavia, I was looking you, my love;
What, are your letters ready? I have giv'n
My last instructions.

OCTAVIA. Mine, my lord, are written.

ANTONY. Ventidius.
[*Drawing him aside*]

VENTIDIUS. My lord?

ANTONY. A word in private.
When saw you Dollabella?

VENTIDIUS. Now, my lord,
He parted hence, and Cleopatra with him.

ANTONY. Speak softly.— 'Twas by my command he went,
To bear my last farewell.

VENTIDIUS. [*Aloud*] It looked indeed
Like your farewell.

ANTONY. More softly.— My farewell?
What secret meaning have you in those words
Of "My farewell"? He did it by my order.

VENTIDIUS. [*Aloud*] Then he obeyed your order. I suppose
You bid him do it with all gentleness,
All kindness, and all — love.

[1] test.

ANTONY. How she mourned,
The poor forsaken creature!
VENTIDIUS. She took it as she ought; she bore your parting
As she did Cæsar's, as she would another's,
Were a new love to come.
ANTONY. [*Aloud*] Thou dost belie her;
Most basely and maliciously belie her.
VENTIDIUS. I thought not to displease you; I have done.
OCTAVIA. [*Coming up*] You seem disturbed, my lord.
ANTONY. A very trifle.
Retire, my love.
VENTIDIUS. It was indeed a trifle.
He sent —
ANTONY. [*Angrily*] No more. Look how thou disobey'st me;
Thy life shall answer it.
OCTAVIA. Then 'tis no trifle.
VENTIDIUS. [*To* OCTAVIA] 'Tis less; a very nothing; you too
saw it,
As well as I, and therefore 'tis no secret.
ANTONY. She saw it!
VENTIDIUS. Yes; she saw young Dollabella —
ANTONY. Young Dollabella!
VENTIDIUS. Young, I think him young,
And handsome too; and so do others think him.
But what of that? He went by your command,
Indeed, 'tis probable, with some kind message;
For she received it graciously; she smiled;
And then he grew familiar with her hand,
Squeezed it, and worried it with ravenous kisses;
She blushed, and sighed, and smiled, and blushed again;
At last she took occasion to talk softly,
And brought her cheek up close, and leaned on his;
At which he whispered kisses back on hers;
And then she cried aloud that constancy
Should be rewarded.

OCTAVIA. This I saw and heard.
ANTONY. What woman was it whom you heard and saw
So playful with my friend?
Not Cleopatra?
VENTIDIUS. Even she, my lord.
ANTONY. My Cleopatra?
VENTIDIUS. Your Cleopatra;
Dollabella's Cleopatra; every man's Cleopatra.[1]
ANTONY. Thou liest.
VENTIDIUS. I do not lie, my lord.
Is this so strange? Should mistresses be left,
And not provide against a time of change?
You know she's not much used to lonely nights.
ANTONY. I'll think no more on't.
I know 'tis false, and see the plot betwixt you.
You needed not have gone this way, Octavia.
What harms it you that Cleopatra's just?
She's mine no more. I see, and I forgive:
Urge it no farther, love.
OCTAVIA. Are you concerned,
That she's found false?
ANTONY. I should be, were it so;
For, though 'tis past, I would not that the world
Should tax my former choice, that I loved one
Of so light note; but I forgive you both.
VENTIDIUS. What has my age deserved that you should think
I would abuse your ears with perjury?
If heav'n be true, she's false.
ANTONY. Though heav'n and earth
Should witness it, I'll not believe her tainted.
VENTIDIUS. I'll bring you, then, a witness
From hell, to prove her so.— Nay, go not back,
[*Seeing* ALEXAS *just entering, and starting back*]
For stay you must and shall.

[1] Imitates Shakespeare's "Much Ado about Nothing," III, ii, 105–110.

ALEXAS. What means my lord?

VENTIDIUS. To make you do what most you hate,— speak truth.
You are of Cleopatra's private counsel,
Of her bed-counsel, her lascivious hours;
Are conscious of each nightly change she makes,
And watch her, as Chaldeans[1] do the moon,
Can tell what signs she passes through, what day.

ALEXAS. My noble lord!

VENTIDIUS. My most illustrious pander,[2]
No fine speech, no cadence, no turned periods,
But a plain homespun truth, is what I ask;
I did, myself, o'erhear your queen make love
To Dollabella. Speak; for I will know
By your confession what more passed betwixt 'em;
How near the bus'ness draws to your employment;
And when the happy hour.

ANTONY. Speak truth, Alexas; whether it offend
Or please Ventidius, care not; justify
Thy injured queen from malice; dare his worst.

OCTAVIA. [*Aside*] See how he gives him courage! how he fears
To find her false! and shuts his eyes to truth,
Willing to be misled!

ALEXAS. As far as love may plead for woman's frailty,
Urged by desert and greatness of the lover,
So far, divine Octavia, may my queen
Stand e'en excused to you for loving him
Who is your lord; so far, from brave Ventidius,
May her past actions hope a fair report.

ANTONY. 'Tis well, and truly spoken: mark, Ventidius.

ALEXAS. To you, most noble emperor, her strong passion
Stands not excused, but wholly justified.
Her beauty's charms alone, without her crown,
From Ind and Meroe[3] drew the distant vows

[1] The Chaldeans, early Babylonians who excelled in astrology.
[2] A go-between in intrigues of love. [3] A kingdom of Ethiopia.

Of sighing kings; and at her feet were laid
The scepters of the earth, exposed on heaps
To choose where she would reign;
She thought a Roman only could deserve her,
And of all Romans only Antony;
And to be less than wife to you, disdained
Their lawful passion.

ANTONY. 'Tis but truth.

ALEXAS. And yet, though love, and your unmatched desert,
Have drawn her from the due regard of honor,
At last Heav'n opened her unwilling eyes
To see the wrongs she offered fair Octavia,
Whose holy bed she lawlessly usurped;
The sad effects of this improsperous war
Confirmed those pious thoughts.

VENTIDIUS. [*Aside*] Oh, wheel you there?
Observe him now; the man begins to mend,
And talk substantial reason. Fear not, eunuch;
The emperor has giv'n thee leave to speak.

ALEXAS. Else had I never dared t'offend his ears
With what the last necessity has urged
On my forsaken mistress; yet I must not
Presume to say, her heart is wholly altered.

ANTONY. No, dare not for thy life; I charge thee dare not
Pronounce that fatal word!

OCTAVIA. [*Aside*] Must I bear this? Good Heav'n, afford me patience.

VENTIDIUS. On, sweet eunuch; my dear half man, proceed.

ALEXAS. Yet Dollabella
Has loved her long; he, next my godlike lord,
Deserves her best; and should she meet his passion,
Rejected, as she is, by him she loved —

ANTONY. Hence from my sight! for I can bear no more;
Let Furies drag thee quick to hell; let all
The longer damned have rest; each torturing hand

Do thou employ, till Cleopatra comes;
Then join thou too, and help to torture her!
[*Exit* ALEXAS, *thrust out by* ANTONY.]

OCTAVIA. 'Tis not well,
Indeed, my lord, 'tis much unkind to me,
To show this passion, this extreme concernment,
For an abandoned, faithless prostitute.

ANTONY. Octavia, leave me; I am much disordered;
Leave me, I say.

OCTAVIA. My lord?

ANTONY. I bid you leave me.

VENTIDIUS. Obey him, madam; best withdraw a while,
And see how this will work.

OCTAVIA. Wherein have I offended you, my lord,
That I am bid to leave you? Am I false,
Or infamous? Am I a Cleopatra?
Were I she,
Base as she is, you would not bid me leave you;
But hang upon my neck, take slight excuses,
And fawn upon my falsehood.

ANTONY. 'Tis too much,
Too much, Octavia; I am pressed with sorrows
Too heavy to be borne; and you add more;
I would retire, and recollect what's left
Of man within, to aid me.

OCTAVIA. You would mourn,
In private, for your love, who has betrayed you.
You but did half return to me; your kindness
Lingered behind with her. I hear, my lord,
You make conditions for her,
And would include her treaty. Wondrous proofs
Of love to me!

ANTONY. Are you my friend, Ventidius?
Or are you turned a Dollabella too,
And let this Fury loose?

VENTIDIUS. Oh, be advised,
Sweet madam, and retire.
OCTAVIA. Yes, I will go; but never to return.
You shall no more be haunted with this Fury.
My lord, my lord, love will not always last,
When urged with long unkindness and disdain:
Take her again whom you prefer to me;
She stays but to be called. Poor cozened[1] man!
Let a feigned parting give her back your heart,
Which a feigned love first got; for injured me,
Though my just sense of wrongs forbid my stay,
My duty shall be yours.
To the dear pledges of our former love
My tenderness and care shall be transferred,
And they shall cheer, by turns, my widowed nights;
So take my last farewell; for I despair
To have you whole, and scorn to take you half. [*Exit.*]
VENTIDIUS. I combat Heav'n, which blasts my best designs:
My last attempt must be to win her back;
But oh! I fear in vain. [*Exit.*]
ANTONY. Why was I framed with this plain, honest heart,
Which knows not to disguise its griefs and weakness,
But bears its workings outward to the world?
I should have kept the mighty anguish in,
And forced a smile at Cleopatra's falsehood;
Octavia had believed it, and had stayed.
But I am made a shallow-forded stream,
Seen to the bottom: all my clearness scorned,
And all my faults exposed.— See where he comes,

[*Enter* DOLLABELLA.]

Who has profaned the sacred name of friend,
And worn it into vileness!
With how secure a brow, and specious form,

[1] cheated, deluded.

He gilds the secret villain! Sure that face
Was meant for honesty; but Heav'n mismatched it,
And furnished treason out with nature's pomp,
To make its work more easy.
DOLLABELLA. O my friend!
ANTONY. Well, Dollabella, you performed my message?
DOLLABELLA. I did, unwillingly.
ANTONY. Unwillingly?
Was it so hard for you to bear our parting?
You should have wished it.
DOLLABELLA. Why?
ANTONY. Because you love me.
And she received my message with as true,
With as unfeigned a sorrow as you brought it?
DOLLABELLA. She loves you, e'en to madness.
ANTONY. Oh, I know it.
You, Dollabella, do not better know
How much she loves me. And should I
Forsake this beauty, this all-perfect creature?
DOLLABELLA. I could not, were she mine.
ANTONY. And yet you first
Persuaded me; how come you altered since?
DOLLABELLA. I said at first I was not fit to go;
I could not hear her sighs and see her tears,
But pity must prevail; and so, perhaps,
It may again with you; for I have promised,
That she should take her last farewell; and, see,
She comes to claim my word.

[*Enter* CLEOPATRA.]

ANTONY. False Dollabella!
DOLLABELLA. What's false, my lord?
ANTONY. Why, Dollabella's false,
And Cleopatra's false; both false and faithless.
Draw near, you well-joined wickedness, you serpents,

Whom I have in my kindly bosom warmed
Till I am stung to death.
DOLLABELLA. My lord, have I
Deserved to be thus used?
CLEOPATRA. Can Heav'n prepare
A newer torment? Can it find a curse
Beyond our separation?
ANTONY. Yes, if fate
Be just, much greater; Heav'n should be ingenious
In punishing such crimes. The rolling stone[1]
And gnawing vulture[2] were slight pains, invented
When Jove was young, and no examples known
Of mighty ills; but you have ripened sin
To such a monstrous growth, 'twill pose[3] the gods
To find an equal torture. Two, two such!—
Oh, there's no farther name,— two such! to me,
To me, who locked my soul within your breasts,
Had no desires, no joys, no life, but you;
When half the globe was mine, I gave it you
In dowry with my heart; I had no use,
No fruit of all, but you; a friend and mistress
Was what the world could give. O Cleopatra!
O Dollabella! how could you betray
This tender heart, which with an infant fondness
Lay lulled betwixt your bosoms, and there slept,
Secure of injured faith?[4]
DOLLABELLA. If she has wronged you,
Heav'n, Hell, and you revenge it.
ANTONY. If she wronged me,

[1] Sisyphus was condemned in Hades to roll uphill a huge stone, which always fell back again.
[2] Prometheus was chained to Mt. Caucasus, with a vulture tearing at his liver.
[3] puzzle.
[4] secure against breach of faith.

Thou wouldst evade thy part of guilt; but swear
Thou lov'st not her.

DOLLABELLA. Not so as I love you.

ANTONY. Not so! Swear, swear, I say, thou dost not love her.

DOLLABELLA. No more than friendship will allow.

ANTONY. No more?
Friendship allows thee nothing; thou art perjured —
And yet thou didst not swear thou lov'dst her not;
But not so much, no more. O trifling hypocrite,
Who dar'st not own to her, thou dost not love,
Nor own to me, thou dost! Ventidius heard it;
Octavia saw it.

CLEOPATRA. They are enemies.

ANTONY. Alexas is not so; he, he confessed it;
He who next hell best knew it, he avowed it.

[*To* DOLLABELLA]

Why do I seek a proof beyond yourself?
You, whom I sent to bear my last farewell,
Returned to plead her stay.

DOLLABELLA. What shall I answer?
If to have loved be guilt, then I have sinned;
But if to have repented of that love
Can wash away my crime, I have repented.
Yet, if I have offended past forgiveness,
Let not her suffer; she is innocent.

CLEOPATRA. Ah, what will not a woman do, who loves?
What means will she refuse, to keep that heart
Where all her joys are placed? 'Twas I encouraged,
'Twas I blew up the fire that scorched his soul,
To make you jealous, and by that regain you.
But all in vain; I could not counterfeit:
In spite of all the dams my love broke o'er,
And drowned my heart again; fate took th'occasion;
And thus one minute's feigning has destroyed
My whole life's truth.

ANTONY. Thin cobweb arts of falsehood;
Seen, and broke through at first.
DOLLABELLA. Forgive your mistress.
CLEOPATRA. Forgive your friend.
ANTONY. You have convinced yourselves;
You plead each other's cause; what witness have you,
That you but meant to raise my jealousy?
CLEOPATRA. Ourselves, and Heaven.
ANTONY. Guilt witnesses for guilt. Hence love and friendship!
You have no longer place in human breasts,
These two have driv'n you out. Avoid[1] my sight;
I would not kill the man whom I have loved,
And cannot hurt the woman; but avoid me;
I do not know how long I can be tame;
For if I stay one minute more to think
How I am wronged, my justice and revenge
Will cry so loud within me, that my pity
Will not be heard for either.
DOLLABELLA. Heav'n has but
Our sorrow for our sins; and then delights
To pardon erring man; sweet mercy seems
Its darling attribute, which limits justice[2];
As if there were degrees in infinite,
And infinite would rather want perfection
Than punish to extent.[3]
ANTONY. I can forgive
A foe; but not a mistress and a friend.
Treason is there in its most horrid shape
Where trust is greatest, and the soul resigned
Is stabbed by its own guards: I'll hear no more;
Hence from my sight forever!

[1] leave.
[2] Compare with the mercy speech of Portia ("The Merchant of Venice," IV, i, 184–202).
[3] to the fullest extent.

CLEOPATRA. How? forever!
I cannot go one moment from your sight,
And must I go forever?
My joys, my only joys, are centered here:
What place have I to go to? my own kingdom?
That I have lost for you; or to the Romans?
They hate me for your sake: or must I wander
The wide world o'er, a helpless, banished woman,
Banished for love of you; banished from you?
Aye, there's the banishment! Oh, hear me; hear me,
With strictest justice; for I beg no favor;
And if I have offended you, then kill me,
But do not banish me.
ANTONY. I must not hear you.
I have a fool within me takes your part;
But honor stops my ears.
CLEOPATRA. For pity hear me!
Would you cast off a slave who followed you?
Who crouched beneath your spurn?— He has no pity!
See if he gives one tear to my departure;
One look, one kind farewell; oh, iron heart!
Let all the gods look down, and judge betwixt us
If he did ever love!
ANTONY. No more; Alexas!
DOLLABELLA. A perjured villain!
ANTONY. [*To* CLEOPATRA] Your Alexas; yours.
CLEOPATRA. Oh, 'twas his plot; his ruinous design,
T'engage you in my love by jealousy.
Hear him; confront him with me; let him speak.
ANTONY. I have; I have.
CLEOPATRA. And if he clear me not —
ANTONY. Your creature! one who hangs upon your smiles!
Watches your eye, to say or to unsay
Whate'er you please! I am not to be moved.
CLEOPATRA. Then must we part? Farewell, my cruel lord!

Th'appearance is against me; and I go,
Unjustified, forever from your sight.
How I have loved, you know; how yet I love,
My only comfort is, I know myself:
I love you more, e'en now you are unkind,
Than when you loved me most; so well, so truly,
I'll never strive against it; but die pleased,
To think you once were mine.

ANTONY. Good Heav'n, they weep at parting!
Must I weep too? that calls 'em innocent.
I must not weep; and yet I must, to think
That I must not forgive.—
Live, but live wretched; 'tis but just you should,
Who made me so; live from each other's sight;
Let me not hear you meet; set all the earth
And all the seas betwixt your sundered loves;
View nothing common but the sun and skies;
Now, all take several ways;
And each your own sad fate, with mine, deplore;
That you were false, and I could trust no more.

[*Exeunt severally.*[1]]

ACT V

[CLEOPATRA, CHARMION, IRAS]

CHARMION. Be juster, Heav'n; such virtue punished thus
Will make us think that Chance rules all above,
And shuffles with a random hand the lots
Which man is forced to draw.

CLEOPATRA. I could tear out these eyes, that gained his heart
And had not power to keep it. Oh, the curse
Of doting on, e'en when I find it dotage!
Bear witness, gods, you heard him bid me go;

[1] They go out separately.

You, whom he mocked with imprecating vows[1]
Of promised faith! — I'll die; I will not bear it.
You may hold me —
[*She pulls out her dagger, and they hold her.*]
But I can keep my breath; I can die inward,
And choke this love.

[*Enter* Alexas.]

Iras. Help, O Alexas, help!
The queen grows desperate; her soul struggles in her
With all the agonies of love and rage,
And strives to force its passage.
Cleopatra. Let me go.
Art thou there, traitor? — Oh,
Oh, for a little breath, to vent my rage —
Give, give me way, and let me loose upon him.
Alexas. Yes, I deserve it, for my ill-timed truth.
Was it for me to prop
The ruins of a falling majesty?
To place myself beneath the mighty flaw,[2]
Thus to be crushed, and pounded into atoms,
By its o'erwhelming weight? 'Tis too presuming
For subjects to preserve that willful power
Which courts its own destruction.
Cleopatra. I would reason
More calmly with you. Did not you o'errule
And force my plain, direct, and open love
Into these crooked paths of jealousy?
Now, what's th'event?[3] Octavia is removed;
But Cleopatra's banished. Thou, thou, villain,
Hast pushed my boat to open sea, to prove,[4]

[1] vows calling down evil on himself if he broke faith.
[2] breach, crack.
[3] outcome.
[4] to try.

At my sad cost, if thou canst steer it back.
It cannot be; I'm lost too far; I'm ruined;
Hence, thou impostor, traitor, monster, devil!—
I can no more; thou, and my griefs, have sunk
Me down so low that I want voice to curse thee.

ALEXAS. Suppose some shipwrecked seaman near the shore,
Dropping and faint with climbing up the cliff;
If from above some charitable hand
Pull him to safety, hazarding himself,
To draw the other's weight; would he look back,
And curse him for his pains? The case is yours;
But one step more, and you have gained the height.

CLEOPATRA. Sunk, never more to rise.

ALEXAS. Octavia's gone, and Dollabella banished.
Believe me, madam, Antony is yours.
His heart was never lost, but started off
To jealousy, love's last retreat and covert;
Where it lies hid in shades, watchful in silence,
And list'ning for the sound that calls it back.
Some other, any man ('tis so advanced),
May perfect this unfinished work, which I
(Unhappy only to myself) have left
So easy to his hand.

CLEOPATRA. Look well thou do't; else —

ALEXAS. Else, what your silence threatens.— Antony
Is mounted up the Pharos;[1] from whose turret
He stands surveying our Egyptian galleys,
Engaged with Cæsar's fleet. Now death or conquest!
If the first happen, fate acquits my promise;
If we o'ercome, the conqueror is yours.

[*A distant shout within*]

CHARMION. Have comfort, madam; did you mark that shout?

[*Second shout nearer*]

IRAS. Hark! they redouble it.

[1] Lighthouse, situated on the island Pharos in the Bay of Alexandria.

ALEXAS. 'Tis from the port.
The loudness shows it near; good news, kind heavens!
CLEOPATRA. Osiris[1] make it so!

[*Enter* SERAPION.]

SERAPION. Where, where's the queen?
ALEXAS. How frightfully the holy coward stares
As if not yet recovered of th'assault,
When all his gods, and, what's more dear to him,
His offerings, were at stake.
SERAPION. O horror, horror!
Egypt has been; our latest hour is come:
The queen of nations, from her ancient seat,
Is sunk forever in the dark abyss;
Time has unrolled her glories to the last,
And now closed up the volume.
CLEOPATRA. Be more plain:
Say, whence thou com'st (though fate is in thy face,
Which from thy haggard eyes looks wildly out,
And threatens ere thou speak'st).
SERAPION. I came from Pharos;
From viewing (spare me, and imagine it)
Our land's last hope, your navy —
CLEOPATRA. Vanquished?
SERAPION. No;
They fought not.
CLEOPATRA. Then they fled.
SERAPION. Nor that. I saw,
With Antony, your well-appointed[2] fleet
Row out; and thrice he waved his hand on high,
And thrice with cheerful cries they shouted back;
'Twas then false Fortune, like a fawning strumpet,
About to leave the bankrupt prodigal,
With a dissembled smile would kiss at parting,

[1] Egyptian god, brother and husband of Isis. [2] well-equipped

And flatter to the last; the well-timed oars,
Now dipped from every bank, now smoothly run
To meet the foe; and soon indeed they met,
But not as foes. In few,[1] we saw their caps
On either side thrown up; th'Egyptian galleys
(Received like friends) passed through, and fell behind
The Roman rear; and now, they all come forward,
And ride within the port.

CLEOPATRA. Enough, Serapion;
I've heard my doom.— This needed not, you gods:
When I lost Antony, your work was done;
'Tis but superfluous malice.— Where's my lord?
How bears he this last blow?

SERAPION. His fury cannot be expressed by words:
Thrice he attempted headlong to have fallen
Full on his foes, and aimed at Cæsar's galley;
Withheld, he raves on you; cries he's betrayed.
Should he now find you —

ALEXAS. Shun him; seek your safety,
Till you can clear your innocence.

CLEOPATRA. I'll stay.

ALEXAS. You must not; haste you to your monument,
While I make speed to Cæsar.

CLEOPATRA. Cæsar! No,
I have no business with him.

ALEXAS. I can work him
To spare your life, and let this madman perish.

CLEOPATRA. Base fawning wretch! wouldst thou betray him too?
Hence from my sight! I will not hear a traitor;
'Twas thy design brought all this ruin on us;
Serapion, thou art honest; counsel me;
But haste, each moment's precious.

SERAPION. Retire; you must not yet see Antony.

[1] in few words.

He who began this mischief,
'Tis just he tempt the danger; let him clear you;
And, since he offered you his servile tongue,
To gain a poor precarious life from Cæsar,
Let him expose that fawning eloquence,
And speak to Antony.

ALEXAS. O heavens! I dare not;
I meet my certain death.

CLEOPATRA. Slave, thou deserv'st it.—
Not that I fear my lord, will I avoid him;
I know him noble: when he banished me,
And thought me false, he scorned to take my life;
But I'll be justified, and then die with him.

ALEXAS. O pity me, and let me follow you.

CLEOPATRA. To death, if thou stir hence. Speak, if thou canst,
Now for thy life, which basely thou wouldst save;
While mine I prize at — this! Come, good Serapion.

[*Exeunt* CLEOPATRA, SERAPION, CHARMION, *and* IRAS.]

ALEXAS. O that I less could fear to lose this being,
Which, like a snowball in my coward hand,
The more 'tis grasped, the faster melts away.
Poor reason! what a wretched aid art thou!
For still, in spite of thee,
These two long lovers, soul and body, dread
Their final separation. Let me think:
What can I say to save myself from death?
No matter what becomes of Cleopatra.

ANTONY. [*Within*] Which way? where?

VENTIDIUS. [*Within*] This leads to th'monument.

ALEXAS. Ah me! I hear him; yet I'm unprepared;
My gift of lying's gone;
And this court-devil, which I so oft have raised,
Forsakes me at my need. I dare not stay;
Yet cannot far go hence. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter* ANTONY *and* VENTIDIUS.]

ANTONY. O happy Cæsar! thou hast men to lead:
Think not 'tis thou hast conquered Antony;
But Rome has conquered Egypt. I'm betrayed.
VENTIDIUS. Curse on this treach'rous train!
Their soil and Heav'n infect 'em all with baseness,
And their young souls come tainted to the world
With the first breath they draw.
ANTONY. Th'original villain sure no god created;
He was a bastard of the sun, by Nile,
Aped into man; with all his mother's mud
Crusted about his soul.
VENTIDIUS. The nation is
One universal traitor; and their queen
The very spirit and extract of 'em all.
ANTONY. Is there yet left
A possibility of aid from valor?
Is there one god unsworn to my destruction?
The least unmortgaged hope? for, if there be,
Methinks I cannot fall beneath the fate
Of such a boy as Cæsar.
The world's one half is yet in Antony;
And from each limb of it that's hewed away,
The soul comes back to me.
VENTIDIUS. There yet remain
Three legions in the town. The last assault
Lopped off the rest; if death be your design
(As I must wish it now), these are sufficient
To make a heap about us of dead foes,
An honest pile for burial.
ANTONY. They're enough.
We'll not divide our stars; but, side by side,
Fight emulous, and with malicious eyes
Survey each other's acts; so every death

Thou giv'st, I'll take on me as a just debt,
And pay thee back a soul.

VENTIDIUS. Now you shall see I love you. Not a word
Of chiding more. By my few hours of life,
I am so pleased with this brave Roman fate,
That I would not be Cæsar, to outlive you.
When we put off this flesh, and mount together,
I shall be shown to all th'ethereal crowd, —
"Lo, this is he who died with Antony!"

ANTONY. Who knows but we may pierce through all their troops,
And reach my veterans yet? 'Tis worth the tempting,
T'o'erleap this gulf of fate,
And leave our wond'ring destinies behind.

[*Enter* ALEXAS, *trembling.*]

VENTIDIUS. See, see, that villain!
See Cleopatra stamped upon that face,
With all her cunning, all her arts of falsehood!
How she looks out through those dissembling eyes!
How he has set his count'nance for deceit,
And promises a lie before he speaks!
Let me dispatch him first.

[*Drawing*]

ALEXAS. O spare me, spare me!

ANTONY. Hold; he's not worth your killing. — On thy life
(Which thou mayst keep, because I scorn to take it),
No syllable to justify thy queen;
Save thy base tongue its office.

ALEXAS. Sir, she's gone,
Where she shall never be molested more
By love, or you.

ANTONY. Fled to her Dollabella!
Die, traitor! I revoke my promise! die! [*Going to kill him*]

ALEXAS. O hold! she is not fled.
ANTONY. She is: my eyes
Are open to her falsehood; my whole life
Has been a golden dream of love and friendship;
But, now I wake, I'm like a merchant, roused
From soft repose to see his vessel sinking,
And all his wealth cast o'er. Ingrateful woman!
Who followed me but as the swallow summer,
Hatching her young ones in my kindly beams,
Singing her flatt'ries to my morning wake.[1]
But now my winter comes, she spreads her wings,
And seeks the spring of Cæsar.
ALEXAS. Think not so:
Her fortunes have in all things mixed with yours.
Had she betrayed her naval force to Rome,
How easily might she have gone to Cæsar,
Secure by such a bribe!
VENTIDIUS. She sent it first,
To be more welcome after.
ANTONY. 'Tis too plain,
Else would she have appeared, to clear herself.
ALEXAS. Too fatally she has: she could not bear
To be accused by you; but shut herself
Within her monument; looked down and sighed;
While from her unchanged face the silent tears
Dropped, as they had not leave, but stole their parting.
Some undistinguished words she inly murmured;
At last, she raised her eyes; and, with such looks
As dying Lucrece cast —
ANTONY. My heart forbodes —
VENTIDIUS. All for the best; go on.
ALEXAS. She snatched her poniard,
And, ere we could prevent the fatal blow,

[1] Here probably the same as *levee*, "a morning reception or assembly held by a great personage upon arising from bed."

Plunged it within her breast; then turned to me;
"Go, bear my lord (said she) my last farewell;
And ask him, if he yet suspect my faith."
More she was saying, but death rushed betwixt.
She half pronounced your name with her last breath,
And buried half within her.

VENTIDIUS. Heav'n be praised!

ANTONY. Then art thou innocent, my poor dear love?
And art thou dead?
O those two words! their sound should be divided;
Hadst thou been false, and died; or hadst thou lived,
And hadst been true — But innocence and death!
This shows not well above. Then what am I,
The murderer of this truth, this innocence!
Thoughts cannot form themselves in words so horrid
As can express my guilt!

VENTIDIUS. Is't come to this? The gods have been too gracious:
And thus you thank 'em for't!

ANTONY. [*To* ALEXAS] Why stay'st thou here?
Is it for thee to spy upon my soul,
And see its inward mourning? Get thee hence;
Thou art not worthy to behold what now
Becomes a Roman emperor to perform.

ALEXAS. [*Aside*] He loves her still;
His grief betrays it. Good! The joy to find
She's yet alive, completes the reconcilement.
I've saved myself, and her. But, oh! the Romans!
Fate comes too fast upon my wit,
Hunts me too hard, and meets me at each double. [*Exit.*]

VENTIDIUS. Would she had died a little sooner, though,
Before Octavia went! you might have treated;
Now 'twill look tame, and would not be received.
Come, rouse yourself, and let's die warm together.

ANTONY. I will not fight; there's no more work for war.
The bus'ness of my angry hours is done.

VENTIDIUS. Cæsar is at your gates.
ANTONY. Why, let him enter;
He's welcome now.
VENTIDIUS. What lethargy has crept into your soul?
ANTONY. 'Tis but a scorn of life, and just desire
To free myself from bondage.
VENTIDIUS. Do it bravely.
ANTONY. I will; but not by fighting. O Ventidius!
What should I fight for now? My queen is dead.
I was but great for her; my power, my empire,
Were but my merchandise to buy her love;
And conquered kings, my factors.[1] Now she's dead,
Let Cæsar take the world —
An empty circle, since the jewel's gone
Which made it worth my strife: my being's nauseous;
For all the bribes of life are gone away.
VENTIDIUS. Would you be taken?
ANTONY. Yes, I would be taken;
But, as a Roman ought — dead, my Ventidius;
For I'll convey my soul from Cæsar's reach,
And lay down life myself. 'Tis time the world
Should have a lord, and know whom to obey.
We two have kept its homage in suspense,
And bent the globe, on whose each side we trod,
Till it was dinted inwards; let him walk
Alone upon't; I'm weary of my part.
My torch is out; and the world stands before me,
Like a black desert at th'approach of night;
I'll lay me down, and stray no farther on.
VENTIDIUS. I could be grieved,
But that I'll not outlive you: choose your death;
For, I have seen him in such various shapes,
I care not which I take; I'm only troubled,
The life I bear is worn to such a rag,

[1] business agents.

'Tis scarce worth giving. I could wish, indeed,
We threw it from us with a better grace;
That, like two lions taken in the toils,
We might at least thrust out our paws, and wound
The hunters that inclose us.

ANTONY. I have thought on't.
Ventidius, you must live.

VENTIDIUS. I must not, sir.

ANTONY. Wilt thou not live, to speak some good of me?[1]
To stand by my fair fame, and guard th'approaches
From the ill tongues of men?

VENTIDIUS. Who shall guard mine,
For living after you?

ANTONY. Say I command it.

VENTIDIUS. If we die well, our deaths will speak themselves
And need no living witness.

ANTONY. Thou hast loved me,
And fain I would reward thee; I must die;
Kill me, and take the merit of my death,
To make thee friends with Cæsar.

VENTIDIUS. Thank your kindness.
You said I loved you; and in recompense,
You bid me turn a traitor; did I think
You would have used me thus? — that I should die
With a hard thought of you?

ANTONY. Forgive me, Roman.
Since I have heard of Cleopatra's death,
My reason bears no rule upon my tongue,
But lets my thoughts break all at random out.
I've thought better; do not deny me twice.

VENTIDIUS. By heav'n I will not.
Let it not be t'outlive you.

ANTONY. Kill me first,

[1] Compare with Hamlet's parting request to Horatio in "Hamlet," V, ii, 350–360.

And then die thou; 'tis but just thou serve
Thy friend before thyself.
VENTIDIUS. Give me your hand.
We soon shall meet again. Now, farewell, emperor!—
[*Embrace.*]
Methinks that word's too cold to be my last;
Since death sweeps all distinctions, farewell, friend!
That's all.—
I will not make a bus'ness of a trifle;
And yet I cannot look on you, and kill you;
Pray turn your face.
ANTONY. I do: strike home, be sure.
VENTIDIUS. Home as my sword will reach.
[*Kills himself.*[1]]
ANTONY. Oh, thou mistak'st;
That wound was not of thine; give it me back:
Thou robb'st me of my death.
VENTIDIUS. I do indeed;
But think 'tis the first time I e'er deceived you,
If that may plead my pardon.— And you, gods,
Forgive me, if you will; for I die perjured,
Rather than kill my friend. [*Dies.*]
ANTONY. Farewell! Ever my leader, e'en in death!
My queen and thou have got the start of me,
And I'm the lag of honor. — Gone so soon?
Is Death no more? He used him carelessly,
With a familiar kindness; ere he knocked,
Ran to the door, and took him in his arms,
As who should say, "Y'are welcome at all hours;
A friend need give no warning." Books had[2] spoiled him;
For all the learn'd are cowards by profession.
'Tis not worth

[1] Compare with the similar death of Eros in "Antony and Cleopatra," IV, xiv, 94.
[2] would have.

My farther thought; for death, for aught I know,
Is but to think no more. Here's to the satisfied.
[*Falls on his sword.*]
I've missed my heart. O unperforming hand!
Thou never couldst have erred in a worse time.
My fortune jades me to the last; and death,
Like a great man, takes state, and makes me wait
For my admittance. —
[*Trampling within*]
Some, perhaps, from Cæsar:
If he should find me living, and suspect
That I played booty[1] with my life! I'll mend
My work ere they can reach me. [*Rises upon his knees.*]

[*Enter* CLEOPATRA, CHARMION, *and* IRAS.]

CLEOPATRA. Where is my lord? where is he?
CHARMION. There he lies,
And dead Ventidius by him.
CLEOPATRA. My fears were prophets; I am come too late.
O that accursed Alexas!
[*Runs to him.*]
ANTONY. Art thou living?
Or am I dead before I knew, and thou
The first kind ghost that meets me?
CLEOPATRA. Help me seat him.
Send quickly, send for help!
[*They place him in a chair.*]
ANTONY. I am answered.
We live both. Sit thee down, my Cleopatra;
I'll make the most I can of life, to stay
A moment more with thee.
CLEOPATRA. How is it with you?
ANTONY. 'Tis as with a man

[1] Pretended to lose it, in order to win compassion afterwards.

Removing in a hurry; all packed up,
But one dear jewel that his haste forgot;
And he, for that, returns upon the spur;
So I come back for thee.

CLEOPATRA. Too long, you heav'ns, you have been cruel to me:
Now show your mended faith, and give me back
His fleeting life!

ANTONY. It will not be, my love;
I keep my soul by force.
Say but thou art not false.

CLEOPATRA. 'Tis now too late
To say I'm true: I'll prove it, and die with you.
Unknown to me, Alexas feigned my death;
Which when I knew, I hasted to prevent
This fatal consequence. My fleet betrayed
Both you and me.

ANTONY. And Dollabella —

CLEOPATRA. Scarce
Esteemed before he loved; but hated now.

ANTONY. Enough: my life's not long enough for more.
Thou say'st thou wilt come after; I believe thee;
For I can now believe whate'er thou say'st,
That we may part more kindly.

CLEOPATRA. I will come:
Doubt not, my life, I'll come, and quickly too:
Cæsar shall triumph o'er no part of thee.

ANTONY. But grieve not, while thou stay'st,
My last disastrous times;
Think we have had a clear and glorious day,
And Heav'n did kindly to delay the storm,
Just till our close of ev'ning. Ten years' love,
And not a moment lost, but all improved
To th'utmost joys — what ages have we lived!
And now to die each other's; and so dying,
While hand in hand we walk in groves below,

Whole troops of lovers' ghosts shall flock about us,
And all the train be ours.

CLEOPATRA. Your words are like the notes of dying swans,
Too sweet to last. Were there so many hours
For your unkindness, and not one for love?

ANTONY. No, not a minute. — This one kiss — more worth
Than all I leave to Cæsar. [*Dies.*]

CLEOPATRA. O tell me so again,
And take ten thousand kisses for that word.
My lord, my lord! speak, if you yet have being;
Sign to me, if you cannot speak; or cast
One look! Do anything that shows you live.

IRAS. He's gone too far to hear you;
And this you see, a lump of senseless clay,
The leavings of a soul.

CHARMION. Remember, madam,
He charged you not to grieve.

CLEOPATRA. And I'll obey him.
I have not loved a Roman, not to know
What should become his wife; his wife, my Charmion;
For 'tis to that high title I aspire;
And now I'll not die less. Let dull Octavia
Survive, to mourn him dead; my nobler fate
Shall knit our 'spousals with a tie too strong
For Roman laws to break.

IRAS. Will you then die?

CLEOPATRA. Why shouldst thou make that question?

IRAS. Cæsar is merciful.

CLEOPATRA. Let him be so
To those who want his mercy; my poor lord
Made no such cov'nant with him, to spare me
When he was dead. Yield me to Cæsar's pride?
What! to be led in triumph through the streets,
A spectacle to base plebeian eyes;
While some dejected friend of Antony's,

Close in a corner, shakes his head, and mutters
A secret curse on her who ruined him?
I'll none of that.

CHARMION. Whatever you resolve,
I'll follow, e'en to death.

IRAS. I only feared
For you; but more should fear to live without you.

CLEOPATRA. Why, now 'tis as it should be. Quick, my friends,
Dispatch; ere this, the town's in Cæsar's hands:
My lord looks down concerned, and fears my stay,
Lest I should be surprised;
Keep him not waiting for his love too long.
You, Charmion, bring my crown and richest jewels;
With 'em, the wreath of victory I made
(Vain augury!) for him who now lies dead;
You, Iras, bring the cure of all our ills.

IRAS. The aspics, madam?

CLEOPATRA. Must I bid you twice?

[*Exeunt* CHARMION *and* IRAS.]

'Tis sweet to die, when they would force life on me,
To rush into the dark abode of Death,
And seize him first; if he be like my love,
He is not frightful, sure.
We're now alone, in secrecy and silence;
And is not this like lovers? I may kiss
These pale, cold lips; Octavia does not see me;
And, oh! 'tis better far to have him thus,
Than see him in her arms.— Oh, welcome, welcome!

[*Enter* CHARMION *and* IRAS.]

CHARMION. What must be done?

CLEOPATRA. Short ceremony, friends;
But yet it must be decent. First, this laurel
Shall crown my hero's head; he fell not basely,

Nor left his shield behind him.— Only thou
Couldst triumph o'er thyself; and thou alone
Wert worthy so to triumph.

CHARMION. To what end
These ensigns of your pomp and royalty?

CLEOPATRA. Dull, that thou art! why 'tis to meet my love;
As when I saw him first, on Cydnos' bank,
All sparkling, like a goddess: so adorned,
I'll find him once again; my second 'spousals
Shall match my first in glory. Haste, haste, both,
And dress the bride of Antony.

CHARMION. 'Tis done.

CLEOPATRA. Now seat me by my lord. I claim this place;
For I must conquer Cæsar too, like him,
And win my share o'th'world.— Hail, you dear relics
Of my immortal love!
O let no impious hand remove you hence:
But rest forever here! Let Egypt give
His death that peace, which it denied his life.—
Reach me the casket.

IRAS. Underneath the fruit
The aspic lies.

CLEOPATRA. [*Putting aside the leaves*] Welcome, thou kind deceiver!
Thou best of thieves; who with an easy key
Dost open life, and, unperceived by us,
E'en steal us from ourselves; discharging so
Death's dreadful office better than himself;
Touching our limbs so gently into slumber,
That Death stands by, deceived by his own image,
And thinks himself but Sleep.

SERAPION. [*Within*] The queen, where is she?
The town is yielded, Cæsar's at the gates.

CLEOPATRA. He comes too late t'invade the rights of death.
Haste, bare my arm, and rouse the serpent's fury.
[*Holds out her arm, and draws it back.*]
Coward flesh,
Wouldst thou conspire with Cæsar to betray me,
As thou wert none of mine? I'll force thee to't,
And not be sent by him,
But bring, myself, my soul to Antony.
[*Turns aside, and then shows her arm bloody.*]
Take hence; the work is done.
SERAPION. [*Within*] Break ope the door,
And guard the traitor well.
IRAS. Now, Charmion, to be worthy
Of our great queen and mistress.
[*They apply the aspics.*]
CLEOPATRA. Already, Death, I feel thee in my veins:
I go with such a will to find my lord,
That we shall quickly meet.
A heavy numbness creeps through every limb,
And now 'tis at my head; my eyelids fall,
And my dear love is vanished in a mist.
Where shall I find him, where? O turn me to him,
And lay me on his breast!— Cæsar, thy worst;
Now part us, if thou canst. [*Dies.*]
[IRAS *sinks down at her feet, and dies;* CHARMION *stands behind her chair, as dressing her head.*]

[*Enter* SERAPION, *two* Priests, ALEXAS *bound, Egyptians.*]

2 PRIESTS. Behold, Serapion,
What havoc death has made!
SERAPION. 'Twas what I feared.—
Charmion, is this well done?

CHARMION. Yes, 'tis well done, and like a queen, the last
Of her great race; I follow her.

[*Sinks down: dies.*]

ALEXAS. 'Tis true,
She has done well: much better thus to die,
Than live to make a holiday in Rome.

SERAPION. See, see how the lovers sit in state together,
As they were giving laws to half mankind!
Th'impression of a smile, left in her face,
Shows she died pleased with him for whom she lived,
And went to charm him in another world.
Cæsar's just ent'ring: grief has now no leisure.
Secure that villain, as our pledge of safety,
To grace th'imperial triumph. — Sleep, blest pair,
Secure from human chance, long ages out,
While all the storms of fate fly o'er your tomb;
And fame to late posterity shall tell,
No lovers lived so great, or died so well.

[*Exeunt.*]

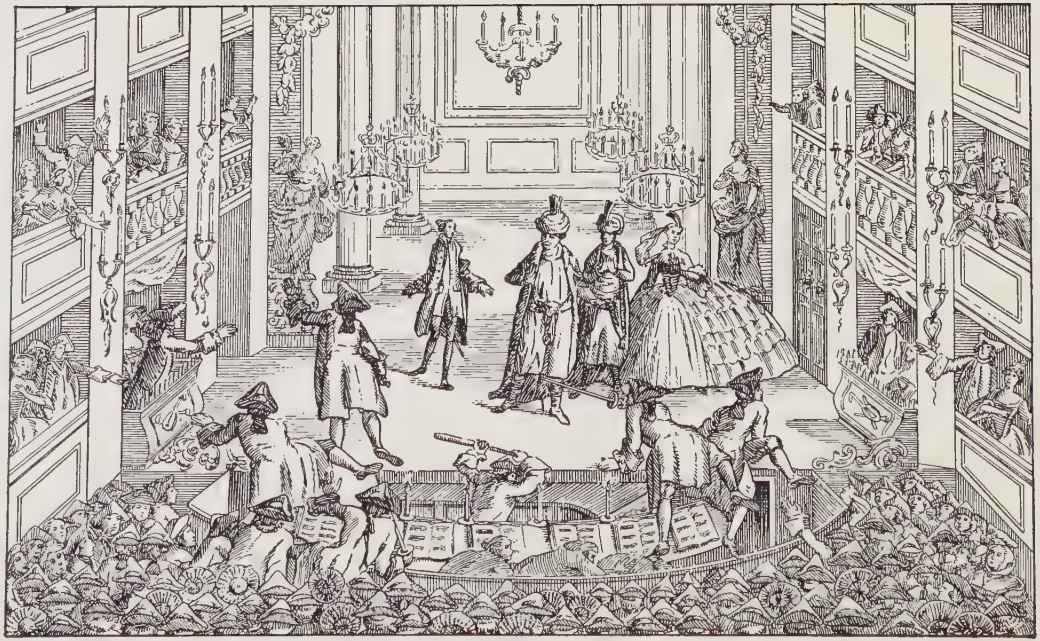
EPILOGUE

Poets, like disputants, when reasons fail,
Have one sure refuge left — and that's to rail.
Fop, coxcomb, fool, are thundered through the pit;
And this is all their equipage of wit.
We wonder how the devil this diff'rence grows,
Betwixt our fools in verse, and yours in prose;
For, 'faith, the quarrel rightly understood,
'Tis civil war with their own flesh and blood.
The threadbare author hates the gaudy coat;
And swears at the gilt coach, but swears afoot:
For 'tis observed of every scribbling man,
He grows a fop as fast as e'er he can;
Prunes up, and asks his oracle, the glass,
If pink or purple best become his face.

For our poor wretch, he neither rails nor prays;
Nor likes your wit just as you like his plays;
He has not yet so much of Mr. Bayes.[1]
He does his best; and if he cannot please,
Would quietly sue out his writ of ease.[2]
Yet, if he might his own grand jury call,
By the fair sex he begs to stand or fall.
Let Cæsar's power the men's ambition move,
But grace you him who lost the world for love!
Yet if some antiquated lady say,
The last age is not copied in his play;
Heav'n help the man who for that face must drudge,
Which only has the wrinkles of a judge.
Let not the young and beauteous join with those;
For should you raise such numerous hosts of foes,
Young wits and sparks he to his aid must call;
'Tis more than one man's work to please you all.

[1] Dryden, the poet laureate, was caricatured under this name in "The Rehearsal" (1671), a satiric parody or burlesque by the Duke of Buckingham and others. The name "Bayes" is a pun on the wreath of laurel (bay) with which successful poets were crowned by the ancients. The printer's brace indicates that three lines rime here, instead of the usual couplet.

[2] A certificate of discharge from employment.



COVENT GARDEN DURING A RIOT FOR OLD PRICES, 1763

"She Stoops to Conquer" was acted here ten years later

FARCE-COMEDY

SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER, BY OLIVER GOLDSMITH (1728–1774)

From the death of Farquhar (1707) to the presentation of Goldsmith's "She Stoops to Conquer" (1773) there was no steady development of English drama.

Tragedy was largely confined to revivals of Shakespeare, Otway, and other favorites, to the occasional production of new plays based on classical models, and especially to the development of domestic or bourgeois tragedy (such as Lillo's "George Barnwell," 1731) depicting the lives of ordinary people.

The satirical comedy of manners had almost lapsed since the death of Farquhar. The two principal types of comic plays were farce and sentimental comedy. Farce deals with the broadly comic side of life, with amusing happenings and absurd situations; it is often more logical than true comedy, but the logic is that of an absurdity carried out to its full consequences. Sentimental comedy rejected the "low" and "natural" humor of farce and of the older English comedy; it was limited to the refined and genteel, presenting only people of elevated manners and speech. Most of all, it taught moral lessons by the triumph of virtue in the happy ending, and by the utterance of "sentiments" or moral ideas in the dialogue.

Naturally enough, Goldsmith reacted sharply against some features of genteel or sentimental comedy. He was a wanderer and an adventurer, the typical Irishman of storybooks. Until he was nearly twenty-four years old he was never outside Ireland, but after that he never returned. For more than three years, until he was twenty-seven, he had no settled residence,

passing through Scotland, England, and many countries of the Continent. From 1756 until his death in 1774 he resided in London, which he left only for short trips into the country or to Paris.

Although his family was of Protestant English extraction, Goldsmith acquired a love of Irish tradition and humor, and a brogue which he never outgrew. After five years of irregular study at Trinity College, Dublin, he received a B. A. degree in 1749. He could not succeed in the professions which he attempted to enter, and even managed to miss the boat on which he planned to sail to America. Deciding at last on the study of medicine, he went to the University of Edinburgh in 1752, and from there to the University of Leyden in 1754; and again from Leyden he set off in midwinter on his famous walking tour of Europe. In 1756 he was in England, perhaps as an actor for a time, certainly as a physician among the poor, an assistant in a school, and a hack writer. He had no great fund of ideas; but he was one of the most entertaining of writers, and his charming style enabled him to excel in any form of composition. In his last years his extravagant habits drove him into the writing of popular histories and scientific compilations, which he found more profitable than original composition. At his death he was the friend of the principal literary men and artists, and he was the best-paid writer in England; but he was about ten thousand dollars in debt. "Was ever poet so trusted before?" asked his friend Dr. Johnson.

"She Stoops to Conquer" was written in 1771 but was not acted until 1773, as the two managers of the day, Colman and Garrick, were afraid to produce it. Even after Colman was persuaded to put it on, actors refused the rôles of Marlow, Tony, and Miss Hardcastle. The comedy was regarded as too "low," the situations as too improbable. Horace Walpole considered the title (adapted from a line in Dryden) as typical:

> Stoops! indeed, so she does; she is dragged up to the knees and has trudged all the way from Southwark fair!

The introduction of "low" scenes had been defended by Goldsmith in the preface to his earlier comedy, "The Good-Natur'd Man" (1768), in which he linked himself with the Elizabethan dramatists:

When I undertook to write a comedy, I confess I was strongly prepossessed in favour of the poets of the last age, and strove to imitate them. The term *genteel comedy* was then unknown amongst us, and little more was desired by an audience, than nature and humour, in whatever walks of life they were most conspicuous. The author of the following scenes never imagined that more would be expected of him, and therefore to delineate character has been his principal aim. Those who know anything of composition are sensible, that in pursuing humour, it will sometimes lead us into the recesses of the mean.... The author . . . hopes that too much refinement will not banish humour and character from ours, as it has already done from the French theatre. Indeed the French comedy is now become so very elevated and sentimental, that it has not only banished humour and *Molière* from the stage, but it has banished all spectators too.

In "She Stoops to Conquer" Goldsmith not only retained some features of "low" humor but he even ridiculed the "genteel" taste of those who objected to it. He introduced a bear-leader whose bear would not dance to any but "the very genteelest of tunes," and a coarse fellow who hated "anything that's *low*." The attack on sentimental comedy begins in the prologue, written by David Garrick, and it is continued in several parts of the play, especially in Marlow's high-flown conversations with Miss Hardcastle. She ridicules their first dialogue (II, i) as "a sober sentimental interview." However, Goldsmith himself fell into some confusion in his use of dialogue; the characters speak very naturally in the comic scenes, but as soon as they become serious they are likely to utter high heroics. Especially in Act V much of the dialogue is pompously sentimental in tone, even when not meant as a burlesque; for example, the humorous realism of the play is violated when two lovers debate the abstract merits of prudence:

Hastings. Such a tedious delay is worse than inconstancy. Let us fly, my charmer. Let us date our happiness from this very moment. Perish fortune! Love and content will increase what we possess beyond a monarch's revenue. Let me prevail.

Miss Neville. No, Mr. Hastings, no. Prudence once more comes to my relief, and I will obey its dictates. In the moment of passion, fortune may be despised, but it ever produces a lasting repentance. I'm resolved to apply to Mr. Hardcastle's compassion for justice and redress.

The sentimental action which she proposes here has often been observed, but the tone of the dialogue is quite as sentimental as the ideas expressed.

Indeed, it is a mistake to say that Goldsmith and Sheridan killed sentimental comedy. Sentimentality is still very much alive in our popular drama; the long runs of such plays as "Lightning" and "Shavings" and the "happy ending" of such a play as "The Barker" are tributes to its continued power to please an audience. Besides, neither Goldsmith nor Sheridan could free himself entirely from the influence of sentimental comedy. Goldsmith could restore the English sense of fun, and Sheridan could revive the old art of the satiric comedy of manners; but they could not avoid the moral reflection and the happy ending, the confidence in human nature and its impulse toward good, and the compliance with the rules of what was considered correct as well as virtuous in conduct. Miss Neville does not elope to Scotland, but returns to ask her guardian for permission to marry; the hero is to be reformed from his wilder ways; and old Hardcastle indulges in frequent bits of homely moralizing.

Goldsmith leaves his audience in no doubt about what is to come; each event is carefully prepared for, and although there are frequent surprises, there is none for which the audience is kept long in suspense. For instance, in the third speech we are told that the house looks like an inn; in Miss Hardcastle's first speech, that she wears a housewife's dress in the evening, and

shortly afterwards that she is to meet the man her father has chosen to be her husband; and in the landlord's remonstrance, that Tony is sending the travelers to his father's house as to an inn.

It has often been objected that the events are too improbable. Goldsmith had mistaken a house in Ireland for an inn during his boyhood, and the dramatist Sheridan drove Madame de Genlis on a wild circuit much as Tony did his mother. A more serious objection might be that everything happens too conveniently for the play. The travelers arrive in the evening, when Miss Hardcastle is sure to be wearing her housewife's dress, and on their way they meet with Tony to misdirect them; they are both unacquainted with the Hardcastles, and even though Hastings finds his sweetheart in the house, he does not tell Marlow of their mistake; Marlow does not observe Miss Hardcastle's face, so that he fails to recognize her as the servant; and Sir Charles Marlow arrives during the same night.

The explanation of all this is that Goldsmith wished to have it so. He asked a friend to whom he had given a ticket how he liked the play; and when the friend replied that it had made him laugh, Goldsmith said, "That is all I ask." Even his supporter Dr. Johnson conceded that the play "borders upon farce." "She Stoops to Conquer" was a great success on its opening night, but Goldsmith never afterwards tried his hand at a play. It has since been frequently revived on the stage and has never lost its popularity.

On one side "She Stoops to Conquer" is farce, with its "mistakes of a night," as the subtitle calls them. The fun is continuous; Goldsmith scorns subtler appeals, and aims directly at the laughing approval of his audience. On another side the play is a comedy of intrigue or of complicated action. The events are crowded close together, with surprises and countersurprises, plots and counterplots; for instance, Marlow is so busy with his own affairs that he restores the jewels to the very woman

from whom Hastings was concealing them. On still another side the play is a comedy of manners, satirizing the pretensions of Mrs. Hardcastle as a fine lady of fashion, the timidity of Marlow in good society, the domestic strife of the Hardcastles, and the effect of parental indulgence on Tony.

But the play is the despair of critics. It conforms to no precise pattern. Its highest praise is that, as Dr. Johnson said of it, it answers "the great end of comedy . . . making an audience merry."

SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER; OR, THE MISTAKES OF A NIGHT

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Sir Charles Marlow	Mrs. Hardcastle
Young Marlow, *his son*	Miss Hardcastle
Hardcastle	Miss Neville
Hastings	Maid
Tony Lumpkin	
Diggory	

Landlords, Servants, etc., etc.

PROLOGUE

By David Garrick, Esq.

[*Enter* Mr. Woodward,[1] *dressed in black, and holding a handkerchief to his eyes.*]

Excuse me, sirs, I pray — I can't yet speak —
I'm crying now — and have been all the week!
'Tis not alone this mourning suit,[2] good masters;
I've that within — for which there are no plasters!
Pray would you know the reason why I'm crying?
The Comic Muse, long sick, is now a-dying!
And if she goes, my tears will never stop:
For as a player, I can't squeeze out one drop:
I am undone, that's all — shall lose my bread —

[1] A famous comic actor of the day; he did not act in this play, refusing the part of Tony Lumpkin.

[2] A parody of "Hamlet," I, ii, 77.

I'd rather, but that's nothing — lose my head.
When the sweet maid is laid upon the bier,
Shuter and I shall be chief mourners here.
To her a mawkish drab of spurious breed,
Who deals in sentimentals will succeed!
Poor Ned[1] and I are dead to all intents,
We can as soon speak Greek as sentiments!
Both nervous grown, to keep our spirits up,
We now and then take down a hearty cup.
What shall we do, if Comedy forsake us?
They'll turn us out, and no one else will take us.
But why can't I be moral? — Let me try —
My heart thus pressing — fixed my face and eye —
With a sententious look, that nothing means
(Faces are blocks, in sentimental scenes),
Thus I begin: "All is not gold that glitters,
Pleasure seems sweet, but proves a glass of bitters.
When ign'rance enters, folly is at hand;
Learning is better far than house and land,
Let not your virtue trip; who trips may stumble,
And virtue is not virtue if she tumble."
I give it up — morals won't do for me;
To make you laugh I must play tragedy.
One hope remains — hearing the maid was ill,
A Doctor[2] comes this night to show his skill.
To cheer her heart, and give your muscles motion,
He, in five drafts prepared, presents a potion:
A kind of magic charm — for be assured,
If you will swallow it, the maid is cured.
But desperate the Doctor and her case is,
If you reject the dose and make wry faces!
This truth he boasts, will boast it while he lives,
No poisonous drugs are mixed in what he gives;

[1] Edward Shuter, a comic actor who took the part of Hardcastle.
[2] Goldsmith.

Should he succeed, you'll give him his degree;
If not, within he will receive no fee!
The college you,[1] must his pretensions back,
Pronounce him regular, or dub him quack.

ACT I

Scene I. *A chamber in an old-fashioned house*

[*Enter* Mrs. Hardcastle *and* Mr. Hardcastle.]

Mrs. Hardcastle. I vow, Mr. Hardcastle, you're very particular. Is there a creature in the whole country, but ourselves, that does not take a trip to town[2] now and then, to rub off the rust a little? There's the two Miss Hoggs, and our neighbor, Mrs. Grigsby, go to take a month's polishing every winter.

Hardcastle. Aye, and bring back vanity and affectation to last them the whole year. I wonder why London cannot keep its own fools at home. In my time, the follies of the town crept slowly among us, but now they travel faster than a stagecoach. Its fopperies come down, not only as inside passengers, but in the very basket.[3]

Mrs. Hardcastle. Aye, *your* times were fine times, indeed; you have been telling us of *them* for many a long year. Here we live in an old rumbling[4] mansion that looks for all the world like an inn, but that we never see company. Our best visitors are old Mrs. Oddfish, the curate's wife, and little Cripplegate, the lame dancing-master; and all our entertainment your old stories of Prince Eugene[5] and the Duke of Marlborough. I hate such old-fashioned trumpery.

[1] The audience, acting as the College of Physicians, must pronounce Goldsmith a doctor qualified to cure comedy; otherwise he is a quack.

[2] London; familiarly called the town.

[3] The poorer passengers often rode in the large wicker basket on the rear axletree with the luggage.

[4] rambling (?)

[5] Prince Eugene of Savoy, ally of Marlborough at Blenheim in 1704; military hero of more than sixty years before.

HARDCASTLE. And I love it. I love everything that's old: old friends, old times, old manners, old books, old wine; and, I believe, Dorothy [*Taking her hand*], you'll own I have been pretty fond of an old wife.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Lord, Mr. Hardcastle, you're forever at your Dorothys and your old wifes. You may be a Darby, but I'll be no Joan,[1] I promise you. I'm not so old as you'd make me, by more than one good year. Add twenty to twenty, and make money of that.

HARDCASTLE. Let me see; twenty added to twenty makes just fifty and seven!

MRS. HARDCASTLE. It's false, Mr. Hardcastle: I was but twenty when I was brought to bed of Tony, that I had by Mr. Lumpkin, my first husband; and he's not come to years of discretion yet.

HARDCASTLE. Nor ever will, I dare answer for him. Aye, you have taught *him* finely!

MRS. HARDCASTLE. No matter, Tony Lumpkin has a good fortune. My son is not to live by his learning. I don't think a boy wants much learning to spend fifteen hundred a year.

HARDCASTLE. Learning, quotha! A mere composition of tricks and mischief!

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Humor, my dear — nothing but humor. Come, Mr. Hardcastle, you must allow the boy a little humor.

HARDCASTLE. I'd sooner allow him a horsepond! If burning the footmen's shoes, frightening the maids, and worrying the kittens be humor, he has it. It was but yesterday he fastened my wig to the back of my chair, and when I went to make a bow, I popped my bald head in Mrs. Frizzle's face![2]

MRS. HARDCASTLE. And am I to blame? The poor boy was always too sickly to do any good. A school would be his death.

[1] Darby and Joan, the traditional happy couple; usually an elderly couple.

[2] A trick played on Goldsmith by Lady Clare's daughter.

When he comes to be a little stronger, who knows what a year or two's Latin may do for him?

HARDCASTLE. Latin for him! A cat and fiddle! No, no, the alehouse and the stable are the only schools he'll ever go to!

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Well, we must not snub the poor boy now, for I believe we shan't have him long among us. Anybody that looks in his face may see he's consumptive.

HARDCASTLE. Aye, if growing too fat be one of the symptoms.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. He coughs sometimes.

HARDCASTLE. Yes, when his liquor goes the wrong way.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. I'm actually afraid of his lungs.

HARDCASTLE. And truly, so am I; for he sometimes whoops like a speaking-trumpet — [*Tony hallooing behind the scenes*] — Oh, there he goes! — A very consumptive figure, truly!

[*Enter* TONY, *crossing the stage.*]

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Tony, where are you going, my charmer? Won't you give papa and I a little of your company, lovey?

TONY. I'm in haste, mother, I cannot stay.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. You shan't venture out this raw evening, my dear; you look most shockingly.

TONY. I can't stay, I tell you. The Three Pigeons[1] expects me down every moment. There's some fun going forward.

HARDCASTLE. Aye, the alehouse, the old place: I thought so.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. A low, paltry set of fellows.

TONY. Not so low, neither. There's Dick Muggins the exciseman, Jack Slang the horse doctor, little Aminadab that grinds the music box, and Tom Twist that spins the pewter platter.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Pray, my dear, disappoint them for one night, at least.

TONY. As for disappointing *them*, I should not much mind; but I can't abide to disappoint *myself*.

[1] An alehouse.

Mrs. Hardcastle. [*Detaining him*] You shan't go.

Tony. I will, I tell you.

Mrs. Hardcastle. I say you shan't.

Tony. We'll see which is strongest, you or I.

[*Exit hauling her out.*]

Hardcastle. Aye, there goes a pair that only spoil each other. But is not the whole age in a combination to drive sense and discretion out of doors? There's my pretty darling Kate; the fashions of the times have almost infected her too. By living a year or two in town, she is as fond of gauze and French frippery as the best of them.

[*Enter* Miss Hardcastle.]

Hardcastle. Blessings on my pretty innocence! Dressed out as usual, my Kate! Goodness, what a quantity of superfluous silk hast thou got about thee, girl! I could never teach the fools of this age that the indigent world could be clothed out of the trimmings of the vain.

Miss Hardcastle. You know our agreement, sir. You allow me the morning to receive and pay visits, and to dress in my own manner; and in the evening I put on my housewife's dress, to please you.

Hardcastle. Well, remember, I insist on the terms of our agreement; and, by the by, I believe I shall have occasion to try your obedience this very evening.

Miss Hardcastle. I protest, sir, I don't comprehend your meaning.

Hardcastle. Then to be plain with you, Kate, I expect the young gentleman I have chosen to be your husband from town this very day. I have his father's letter, in which he informs me his son is set out, and that he intends to follow himself shortly after.

Miss Hardcastle. Indeed! I wish I had known something of this before. Bless me, how shall I behave? It's a thousand to one I shan't like him; our meeting will be so formal, and so like

a thing of business, that I shall find no room for friendship or esteem.

HARDCASTLE. Depend upon it, child, I'll never control your choice; but Mr. Marlow, whom I have pitched upon, is the son of my old friend, Sir Charles Marlow, of whom you have heard me talk so often. The young gentleman has been bred a scholar, and is designed for an employment in the service of his country. I am told he's a man of an excellent understanding.

MISS HARDCASTLE. Is he?

HARDCASTLE. Very generous.

MISS HARDCASTLE. I believe I shall like him.

HARDCASTLE. Young and brave.

MISS HARDCASTLE. I'm sure I shall like him.

HARDCASTLE. And very handsome.

MISS HARDCASTLE. My dear papa, say no more [*Kissing his hand*], he's mine, I'll have him!

HARDCASTLE. And, to crown all, Kate, he's one of the most bashful and reserved young fellows in all the world.

MISS HARDCASTLE. Eh! you have frozen me to death again. That word "reserved" has undone all the rest of his accomplishments. A reserved lover, it is said, always makes a suspicious husband.

HARDCASTLE. On the contrary, modesty seldom resides in a breast that is not enriched with nobler virtues. It was the very feature in his character that first struck me.

MISS HARDCASTLE. He must have more striking features to catch me, I promise you. However, if he be so young, so handsome, and so everything, as you mention, I believe he'll do still. I think I'll have him.

HARDCASTLE. Aye, Kate, but there is still an obstacle. It is more than an even wager he may not have *you*.

MISS HARDCASTLE. My dear papa, why will you mortify one so? — Well, if he refuses, instead of breaking my heart at his indifference, I'll only break my glass for its flattery, set my cap to some newer fashion, and look out for some less difficult admirer.

HARDCASTLE. Bravely resolved! In the meantime I'll go prepare the servants for his reception; as we seldom see company, they want as much training as a company of recruits the first day's muster. [*Exit.*]

MISS HARDCASTLE. Lud,[1] this news of papa's puts me all in a flutter. Young, handsome; these he put last, but I put them foremost. Sensible, good-natured; I like all that. But then reserved, and sheepish, that's much against him. Yet can't he be cured of his timidity, by being taught to be proud of his wife? Yes, and can't I — But I vow I'm disposing of the husband before I have secured the lover!

[*Enter* MISS NEVILLE.]

MISS HARDCASTLE. I'm glad you're come, Neville, my dear. Tell me, Constance, how do I look this evening? Is there anything whimsical about me? Is it one of my well-looking days, child? Am I in face[2] to-day?

MISS NEVILLE. Perfectly, my dear. Yet now I look again — bless me! — sure no accident has happened among the canary birds or the goldfishes? Has your brother or the cat been meddling? Or has the last novel been too moving?

MISS HARDCASTLE. No; nothing of all this. I have been threatened — I can scarce get it out — I have been threatened with a lover!

MISS NEVILLE. And his name —

MISS HARDCASTLE. Is Marlow.

MISS NEVILLE. Indeed!

MISS HARDCASTLE. The son of Sir Charles Marlow.

MISS NEVILLE. As I live, the most intimate friend of Mr. Hastings, *my* admirer. They are never asunder. I believe you must have seen him when we lived in town.

MISS HARDCASTLE. Never.

[1] Fashionable affectation for "Lord."
[2] looking my best.

Miss Neville. He's a very singular character, I assure you. Among women of reputation and virtue he is the modestest man alive, but his acquaintance give him a very different character among creatures of another stamp; you understand me?

Miss Hardcastle. An odd character, indeed! I shall never be able to manage him. What shall I do? Pshaw, think no more of him, but trust to occurrences for success. But how goes on your own affair, my dear? Has my mother been courting you for my brother Tony, as usual?

Miss Neville. I have just come from one of our agreeable *tête-à-têtes*. She has been saying a hundred tender things, and setting off her pretty monster as the very pink of perfection.

Miss Hardcastle. And her partiality is such that she actually thinks him so. A fortune like yours is no small temptation. Besides, as she has the sole management of it, I'm not surprised to see her unwilling to let it go out of the family.

Miss Neville. A fortune like mine, which chiefly consists in jewels, is no such mighty temptation. But, at any rate, if my dear Hastings be but constant, I make no doubt to be too hard for her at last. However, I let her suppose that I am in love with her son, and she never once dreams that my affections are fixed upon another.

Miss Hardcastle. My good brother holds out stoutly. I could almost love him for hating you so.

Miss Neville. It is a good-natured creature at bottom, and I'm sure would wish to see me married to anybody but himself. But my aunt's bell rings for our afternoon's walk round the improvements. *Allons!*[1] Courage is necessary, as our affairs are critical.

Miss Hardcastle. Would it were bedtime and all were well.[2] [*Exeunt.*]

[1] Let's go!

[2] Quoted from Falstaff, as he went unwillingly into battle ("1 Henry IV," V, i, 125).

SCENE II. *An alehouse room. Several shabby fellows with punch and tobacco.* TONY *at the head of the table, a little higher than the rest, a mallet in his hand*

OMNES. Hurrea, hurrea, hurrea, bravo!

FIRST FELLOW. Now, gentlemen, silence for a song. The 'squire is going to knock himself down[1] for a song.

OMNES. Aye, a song, a song.

TONY. Then I'll sing you, gentlemen, a song I made upon this alehouse, the Three Pigeons.

SONG

Let schoolmasters puzzle their brain
With grammar, and nonsense, and learning;
Good liquor, I stoutly maintain,
Gives genus[2] a better discerning.
Let them brag of their heathenish gods,
Their Lethes, their Styxes, and Stygians,[3]
Their Quis, and their Quæs, and their Quods,[4]
They're all but a parcel of pigeons.[5]
Toroddle, toroddle, toroll!

When Methodist preachers come down,
A-preaching that drinking is sinful,
I'll wager the rascals a crown,
They always preach best with a skinful.
But when you come down with your pence,
For a slice of their scurvy religion,
I'll leave it to all men of sense,
But you my good friend, are the pigeon.
Toroddle, toroddle, toroll!

Then come, put the jorum[6] about,
And let us be merry and clever,

[1] offer himself (*as at an auction*).
[2] genius.
[3] Names in classical mythology.
[4] Pronouns in Latin.
[5] dupes, fools.
[6] Large drinking bowl.

Our hearts and our liquors are stout,
Here's the Three Jolly Pigeons forever.
Let some cry up woodcock or hare,
Your bustards, your ducks, and your widgeons;
But of all the birds[1] in the air,
Here's a health to the Three Jolly Pigeons.
Toroddle, toroddle, toroll!

OMNES. Bravo, bravo!

FIRST FELLOW. The 'squire has got spunk in him.

SECOND FELLOW. I loves to hear him sing, bekeays he never gives us nothing that's *low*.

THIRD FELLOW. O damn anything that's *low*! I cannot bear it.

FOURTH FELLOW. The genteel thing is the genteel thing at any time, if so be that a gentleman bees in a concatenation accordingly.

THIRD FELLOW. I like the maxum of it, Master Muggins. What though I am obligated to dance a bear? — a man may be a gentleman for all that. May this be my poison if my bear ever dances but to the very genteelest of tunes — "Water Parted,"[2] or the minuet in "Ariadne."[3]

SECOND FELLOW. What a pity it is the 'squire is not come to his own. It would be well for all the publicans within ten miles round of him.

TONY. Ecod,[4] and so it would, Master Slang. I'd then show what it was to keep choice of company.

SECOND FELLOW. Oh, he takes after his own father for that. To be sure, old 'Squire Lumpkin was the finest gentleman I ever set my eyes on. For winding[5] the straight horn, or beating a thicket for a hare, or a wench, he never had his fellow. It was a saying in the place that he kept the best horses, dogs, and girls in the whole county.

[1] One of Goldsmith's blunders, or Irish bulls; he seems to include the hare among the birds.

[2] Song of Arbaces in Arne's "Artaxerxes."

[3] Opera by Handel.

[4] by God.

[5] sounding.

TONY. Ecod, and when I'm of age I'll be no bastard, I promise you. I have been thinking of Bet Bouncer and the miller's gray mare to begin with. But come, my boys, drink about and be merry, for you pay no reckoning. Well, Stingo,[1] what's the matter?

[*Enter* LANDLORD.]

LANDLORD. There be two gentlemen in a post-chaise[2] at the door. They have lost their way upo' the forest, and they are talking something about Mr. Hardcastle.

TONY. As sure as can be, one of them must be the gentleman that's coming down to court my sister. Do they seem to be Londoners?

LANDLORD. I believe they may. They look woundily[3] like Frenchmen.

TONY. Then desire them to step this way, and I'll set them right in a twinkling.

[*Exit* LANDLORD.]

Gentlemen, as they mayn't be good enough company for you, step down for a moment, and I'll be with you in the squeezing of a lemon.[4]

[*Exeunt* Mob.]

TONY. Father-in-law[5] has been calling me whelp and hound this half-year. Now, if I pleased, I could be so revenged upon the old grumbletonian. But then I'm afraid — afraid of what? I shall soon be worth fifteen hundred a year, and let him frighten me out of *that* if he can!

[*Enter* LANDLORD, *conducting* MARLOW *and* HASTINGS.]

MARLOW. What a tedious, uncomfortable day have we had of it! We were told it was but forty miles across the country, and we have come above threescore.

[1] Strong beer; a nickname for a landlord.

[2] Carriage hired from stage to stage, or drawn by horses so hired.

[3] exceedingly (*Londoners would seem like foreigners in the country*).

[4] For making punch (*Tony's allusions are usually to drinking and low sports*).

[5] stepfather.

HASTINGS. And all, Marlow, from that unaccountable reserve of yours, that would not let us inquire more frequently on the way.

MARLOW. I own, Hastings, I am unwilling to lay myself under an obligation to everyone I meet, and often stand the chance of an unmannerly answer.

HASTINGS. At present, however, we are not likely to receive any answer.

TONY. No offense, gentlemen. But I'm told you have been inquiring for one Mr. Hardcastle in these parts. Do you know what part of the country you are in?

HASTINGS. Not in the least, sir, but should thank you for information.

TONY. Nor the way you came?

HASTINGS. No, sir, but if you can inform us —

TONY. Why, gentlemen, if you know neither the road you are going, nor where you are, nor the road you came, the first thing I have to inform you is, that — you have lost your way.

MARLOW. We wanted no ghost to tell us that.[1]

TONY. Pray, gentlemen, may I be so bold as to ask the place from whence you came?

MARLOW. That's not necessary towards directing us where we are to go.

TONY. No offense; but question for question is all fair, you know. Pray, gentlemen, is not this same Hardcastle a cross-grained, old-fashioned, whimsical fellow with an ugly face, a daughter, and a pretty son?

HASTINGS. We have not seen the gentleman, but he has the family you mention.

TONY. The daughter, a tall, trapesing, trolloping, talkative maypole; the son, a pretty, well-bred, agreeable youth, that everybody is fond of?

MARLOW. Our information differs in this. The daughter is said to be well-bred and beautiful; the son, an awkward booby, reared up and spoiled at his mother's apron string.

[1] Adapted from "Hamlet," I, v, 125–126.

TONY. He-he-hem — then, gentlemen, all I have to tell you is, that you won't reach Mr. Hardcastle's house this night, I believe.

HASTINGS. Unfortunate!

TONY. It's a damned long, dark, boggy, dirty, dangerous way. Stingo, tell the gentlemen the way to Mr. Hardcastle's [*Winking upon the* LANDLORD] — Mr. Hardcastle's of Quagmire Marsh; you understand me.

LANDLORD. Master Hardcastle's! Lack-a-daisy,[1] my masters, you're come a deadly deal wrong! When you came to the bottom of the hill, you should have crossed down Squash Lane.

MARLOW. Cross down Squash Lane!

LANDLORD. Then you were to keep straight forward till you came to four roads.

MARLOW. Come to where four roads meet?

TONY. Aye, but you must be sure to take only one of them.

MARLOW. O sir, you're facetious.

TONY. Then, keeping to the right, you are to go sideways till you come upon Crackskull Common: there you must look sharp for the track of the wheel, and go forward till you come to farmer Murrain's barn. Coming to the farmer's barn, you are to turn to the right, and then to the left, and then to the right about again, till you find out the old mill —

MARLOW. Zounds, man! we could as soon find out the longitude![2]

HASTINGS. What's to be done, Marlow?

MARLOW. This house promises but a poor reception, though perhaps the landlord can accommodate us.

LANDLORD. Alack, master, we have but one spare bed in the whole house.

TONY. And to my knowledge, that's taken up by three lodgers already. [*After a pause, in which the rest seem discon-*

[1] An expression of surprise, from "lack-a-day."

[2] In 1714 Parliament had offered a large award for an accurate means of determining longitude at sea. Until the award was granted to John Harrison, in 1773, the investigation was a favorite one with amateurs of science.

certed] I have hit it. Don't you think, Stingo, our landlady could accommodate the gentlemen by the fireside, with — three chairs and a bolster?

HASTINGS. I hate sleeping by the fireside.

MARLOW. And I detest your three chairs and a bolster.

TONY. You do, do you? — then let me see — what if you go on a mile further to the Buck's Head — the old Buck's Head on the hill, one of the best inns in the whole county?

HASTINGS. Oh, ho! so we have escaped an adventure for this night, however.

LANDLORD. [*Apart to* TONY] Sure, you ben't sending them to your father's as an inn, be you?[1]

TONY. Mum, you fool, you. Let *them* find that out. [*To them*] You have only to keep on straight forward, till you come to a large old house by the roadside. You'll see a pair of large horns over the door. That's the sign. Drive up the yard, and call stoutly about you.

HASTINGS. Sir, we are obliged to you. The servants can't miss the way?

TONY. No, no. But I tell you though, the landlord is rich, and going to leave off business; so he wants to be thought a gentleman, saving your presence, he! he! he! He'll be for giving you his company; and, ecod, if you mind him, he'll persuade you that his mother was an alderman and his aunt a justice of the peace!

LANDLORD. A troublesome old blade, to be sure; but 'a[2] keeps as good wines and beds as any in the whole country.

MARLOW. Well, if he supplies us with these, we shall want no further connection. We are to turn to the right, did you say?

TONY. No, no; straight forward. I'll just step myself, and show you a piece of the way. [*To the* LANDLORD] Mum!

LANDLORD. Ah, bless your heart for a sweet, pleasant — damned mischievous son of a whore. [*Exeunt.*]

[1] As a boy in Ireland, Goldsmith had spent a night in a squire's house in Ardagh thinking it an inn. [2] he.

ACT II

SCENE. *An old-fashioned house*

[*Enter* HARDCASTLE, *followed by three or four awkward* Servants.]

HARDCASTLE. Well, I hope you're perfect in the table exercise I have been teaching you these three days. You all know your posts and your places, and can show that you have been used to good company without ever stirring from home?

OMNES. Aye, aye.

HARDCASTLE. When company comes, you are not to pop out and stare, and then run in again like frighted rabbits in a warren.[1]

OMNES. No, no.

HARDCASTLE. You, Diggory, whom I have taken from the barn, are to make a show at the side-table; and you, Roger, whom I have advanced from the plow, are to place yourself behind *my* chair. But you're not to stand so, with your hands in your pockets. Take your hands from your pockets, Roger, and from your head, you blockhead, you. See how Diggory carries his hands. They're a little too stiff, indeed, but that's no great matter.

DIGGORY. Aye, mind how I hold them. I learned to hold my hands this way when I was upon drill for the militia. And so being upon drill —

HARDCASTLE. You must not be so talkative, Diggory. You must be all attention to the guests. You must hear us talk, and not think of talking; you must see us drink and not think of drinking; you must see us eat and not think of eating.

DIGGORY. By the laws, your worship, that's parfectly unpossible. Whenever Diggory sees yeating going forward, ecod, he's always wishing for a mouthful himself.

HARDCASTLE. Blockhead! Is not a bellyful in the kitchen as good as a bellyful in the parlor? Stay your stomach with that reflection.

[1] A place for protecting and breeding game, especially rabbits.

DIGGORY. Ecod, I thank your worship, I'll make a shift to stay my stomach with a slice of cold beef in the pantry.

HARDCASTLE. Diggory, you are too talkative. Then, if I happen to say a good thing, or tell a good story at table, you must not all burst out a-laughing, as if you made part of the company.

DIGGORY. Then, ecod, your worship must not tell the story of Ould Grouse in the gunroom; I can't help laughing at that — he! he! he!— for the soul of me. We have laughed at that these twenty years — ha! ha! ha!

HARDCASTLE. Ha! ha! ha! The story is a good one. Well, honest Diggory, you may laugh at that — but still remember to be attentive. Suppose one of the company should call for a glass of wine, how will you behave? A glass of wine, sir, if you please [*To* DIGGORY].— Eh, why don't you move?

DIGGORY. Ecod, your worship, I never have courage till I see the eatables and drinkables brought upo' the table, and then I'm as bauld as a lion.

HARDCASTLE. What, will nobody move?

FIRST SERVANT. I'm not to leave this pleace.

SECOND SERVANT. I'm sure it's no pleace of mine.

THIRD SERVANT. Nor mine for sartain.

DIGGORY. Wauns,[1] and I'm sure it canna be mine.

HARDCASTLE. You numskulls! and so while, like your betters, you are quarreling for places, the guests must be starved. Oh, you dunces! I find I must begin all over again. — But don't I hear a coach drive into the yard? To your posts, you blockheads! I'll go in the meantime and give my old friend's son a hearty reception at the gate.

[*Exit* HARDCASTLE.]

DIGGORY. By the elevens, my pleace is gone quite out of my head!

ROGER. I know that my pleace is to be everywhere!

FIRST SERVANT. Where the devil is mine?

[1] An oath; from "God's wounds."

SECOND SERVANT. My pleace is to be nowhere at all; and so I'ze go about my business!

[*Exeunt* Servants, *running about as if frighted, different ways.*]

[*Enter* Servants *with candles, showing in* MARLOW *and* HASTINGS.]

SERVANT. Welcome, gentlemen, very welcome. This way.

HASTINGS. After the disappointments of the day, welcome once more, Charles, to the comforts of a clean room and a good fire. Upon my word, a very well-looking house — antique but creditable.

MARLOW. The usual fate of a large mansion. Having first ruined the master by good housekeeping, it at last comes to levy contributions as an inn.

HASTINGS. As you say, we passengers are to be taxed to pay all these fineries. I have often seen a good sideboard, or a marble chimney-piece, though not actually put in the bill, inflame a reckoning confoundedly.

MARLOW. Travelers, George, must pay in all places. The only difference is, that in good inns you pay dearly for luxuries, in bad inns you are fleeced and starved.

HASTINGS. You have lived pretty much among them. In truth, I have been often surprised that you who have seen so much of the world, with your natural good sense and your many opportunities, could never yet acquire a requisite share of assurance.

MARLOW. The Englishman's malady. But tell me, George, where could I have learned that assurance you talk of? My life has been chiefly spent in a college, or an inn, in seclusion from that lovely part of the creation that chiefly teach men confidence. I don't know that I was ever familiarly acquainted with a single modest woman — except my mother. — But among females of another class, you know —

HASTINGS. Aye, among them you are impudent enough, of all conscience!

MARLOW. They are of *us*, you know.

HASTINGS. But in the company of women of reputation I never saw such an idiot, such a trembler. You look for all the world as if you wanted an opportunity of stealing out of the room.

MARLOW. Why, man, that's because I *do* want to steal out of the room. Faith, I have often formed a resolution to break the ice and rattle away at any rate. But I don't know how, a single glance from a pair of fine eyes has totally overset my resolution. An impudent fellow may counterfeit modesty, but I'll be hanged if a modest man can ever counterfeit impudence.

HASTINGS. If you could but say half the fine things to them that I have heard you lavish upon the barmaid of an inn, or even a college bed-maker —

MARLOW. Why, George, I can't say fine things to them. They freeze, they petrify me. They may talk of a comet, or a burning mountain, or some such bagatelle. But to me, a modest woman, dressed out in all her finery, is the most tremendous object of the whole creation.

HASTINGS. Ha! ha! ha! At this rate, man, how can you ever expect to marry?

MARLOW. Never, unless, as among kings and princes, my bride were to be courted by proxy. If, indeed, like an Eastern bridegroom, one were to be introduced to a wife he never saw before, it might be endured. But to go through all the terrors of a formal courtship, together with the episode of aunts, grandmothers, and cousins, and at last to blurt out the broad staring question of "Madam, will you marry me?" No, no, that's a strain much above me, I assure you.

HASTINGS. I pity you. But how do you intend behaving to the lady you are come down to visit at the request of your father?

MARLOW. As I behave to all other ladies. Bow very low, answer "yes" or "no" to all her demands. — But for the rest, I don't think I shall venture to look in her face till I see my father's again.

HASTINGS. I'm surprised that one who is so warm a friend can be so cool a lover.

MARLOW. To be explicit, my dear Hastings, my chief inducement down was to be instrumental in forwarding your happiness, not my own. Miss Neville loves you; the family don't know you; as my friend you are sure of a reception, and let honor do the rest.

HASTINGS. My dear Marlow! But I'll suppress the emotion. Were I a wretch, meanly seeking to carry off a fortune, you should be the last man in the world I would apply to for assistance. But Miss Neville's person is all I ask, and that is mine, both from her deceased father's consent and her own inclination.

MARLOW. Happy man! You have talents and art to captivate any woman. I'm doomed to adore the sex, and yet to converse with the only part of it I despise. This stammer in my address, and this awkward prepossessing visage of mine, can never permit me to soar above the reach of a milliner's apprentice, or one of the duchesses[1] of Drury Lane. — Pshaw! this fellow here to interrupt us.

[*Enter* HARDCASTLE.]

HARDCASTLE. Gentlemen, once more you are heartily welcome. Which is Mr. Marlow? Sir, you're heartily welcome. It's not my way, you see, to receive my friends with my back to the fire. I like to give them a hearty reception in the old style at my gate. I like to see their horses and trunks taken care of.

MARLOW. [*Aside*] He has got our names from the servants already. [*To him*] We approve your caution and hospitality, sir. [*To* HASTINGS] I have been thinking, George, of changing our traveling dresses in the morning. I am grown confoundedly ashamed of mine.

HARDCASTLE. I beg, Mr. Marlow, you'll use no ceremony in this house.

[1] Drury Lane was a notorious resort for immoral women.

HASTINGS. I fancy, Charles, you're right; the first blow is half the battle. I intend opening the campaign with the white and gold.

HARDCASTLE. Mr. Marlow — Mr. Hastings — gentlemen — pray be under no constraint in this house. This is Liberty Hall, gentlemen. You may do just as you please here.

MARLOW. Yet, George, if we open the campaign too fiercely at first, we may want ammunition before it is over. I think to reserve the embroidery to secure a retreat.

HARDCASTLE. Your talking of a retreat, Mr. Marlow, puts me in mind of the Duke of Marlborough, when we went to besiege Denain.[1] He first summoned the garrison —

MARLOW. Don't you think the *ventre d'or*[2] waistcoat will do with the plain brown?

HARDCASTLE. He first summoned the garrison, which might consist of about five thousand men —

HASTINGS. I think not; brown and yellow mix but very poorly.

HARDCASTLE. I say, gentlemen, as I was telling you, he summoned the garrison, which might consist of about five thousand men —

MARLOW. The girls like finery.

HARDCASTLE. Which might consist of about five thousand men, well appointed with stores, ammunition, and other implements of war. "Now," says the Duke of Marlborough to George Brooks, that stood next to him — you must have heard of George Brooks — "I'll pawn my dukedom," says he, "but I take that garrison without spilling a drop of blood!" So —

MARLOW. What, my good friend, if you gave us a glass of punch in the meantime? It would help us to carry on the siege with vigor.

HARDCASTLE. Punch, sir! [*Aside*] This is the most unaccountable kind of modesty I ever met with!

[1] Where the English and their allies were beaten by the French in 1712.
[2] gold-colored.

MARLOW. Yes, sir, punch! A glass of warm punch, after our journey, will be comfortable. This is Liberty Hall, you know.

HARDCASTLE. Here's cup,[1] sir.

MARLOW. [*Aside*] So this fellow, in his Liberty Hall, will only let us have just what he pleases.

HARDCASTLE. [*Taking the cup*] I hope you'll find it to your mind. I have prepared it with my own hands, and I believe you'll own the ingredients are tolerable. Will you be so good as to pledge me, sir? Here, Mr. Marlow, here is our better acquaintance! [*Drinks.*]

MARLOW. [*Aside*] A very impudent fellow this! but he's a character, and I'll humor him a little. Sir, my service to you. [*Drinks.*]

HASTINGS. [*Aside*] I see this fellow wants to give us his company, and forgets that he's an innkeeper before he has learned to be a gentleman.

MARLOW. From the excellence of your cup, my old friend, I suppose you have a good deal of business in this part of the country. Warm work, now and then, at elections, I suppose?

HARDCASTLE. No, sir, I have long given that work over. Since our betters have hit upon the expedient of electing each other, there's no business "for us that sell ale."[2]

HASTINGS. So, then you have no turn for politics, I find.

HARDCASTLE. Not in the least. There was a time, indeed, I fretted myself about the mistakes of government, like other people; but finding myself every day grow more angry, and the government growing no better, I left it to mend itself. Since that, I no more trouble my head about Heyder Ally, or Ally Cawn, than about "Ally Croaker."[3] Sir, my service to you.

HASTINGS. So that, with eating above stairs and drinking

[1] Wine variously flavored.

[2] A joke about the cup he has given them; free drinks were usual during elections.

[3] The first two were Hindu leaders during the conquest of India by Clive and Hastings; the third was a popular Irish song.

below, with receiving your friends within and amusing them without, you lead a good, pleasant, bustling life of it.

HARDCASTLE. I do stir about a great deal, that's certain. Half the differences of the parish are adjusted in this very parlor.

MARLOW. [*After drinking*] And you have an argument in your cup, old gentleman, better than any in Westminster Hall.[1]

HARDCASTLE. Aye, young gentleman, that, and a little philosophy.

MARLOW. [*Aside*] Well, this is the first time I ever heard of an innkeeper's philosophy.

HASTINGS. So then, like an experienced general, you attack them on every quarter. If you find their reason manageable, you attack it with your philosophy; if you find they have no reason, you attack them with this. Here's your health, my philosopher. [*Drinks.*]

HARDCASTLE. Good, very good, thank you; ha! ha! Your generalship puts me in mind of Prince Eugene, when he fought the Turks at the battle of Belgrade.[2] You shall hear.

MARLOW. Instead of the battle of Belgrade, I believe it's almost time to talk about supper. What has your philosophy got in the house for supper?

HARDCASTLE. For supper, sir! [*Aside*] Was ever such a request to a man in his own house!

MARLOW. Yes, sir, supper, sir; I begin to feel an appetite. I shall make devilish work to-night in the larder, I promise you.

HARDCASTLE. [*Aside*] Such a brazen dog sure never my eyes beheld. [*To him*] Why, really, sir, as for supper I can't well tell. My Dorothy and the cook maid settle these things between them. I leave these kind of things entirely to them.

MARLOW. You do, do you?

HARDCASTLE. Entirely. By the by, I believe they are in actual consultation upon what's for supper this moment in the kitchen.

[1] Where the law courts met. [2] In 1717.

MARLOW. Then I beg they'll admit *me* as one of their privy council. It's a way I have got. When I travel, I always choose to regulate my own supper. Let the cook be called. No offense, I hope, sir.

HARDCASTLE. O no, sir, none in the least; yet I don't know how: our Bridget, the cook maid, is not very communicative upon these occasions. Should we send for her, she might scold us all out of the house.

HASTINGS. Let's see your list of the larder then. I ask it as a favor. I always match my appetite to my bill of fare.

MARLOW. [*To* HARDCASTLE, *who looks at them with surprise.*] Sir, he's very right, and it's my way too.

HARDCASTLE. Sir, you have a right to command here. Here, Roger, bring us the bill of fare for to-night's supper. I believe it's drawn out. Your manner, Mr. Hastings, puts me in mind of my uncle, Colonel Wallop. It was a saying of his, that no man was sure of his supper till he had eaten it.

HASTINGS. [*Aside*] All upon the high ropes! His uncle a colonel! We shall soon hear of his mother being a justice of peace. But let's hear the bill of fare.

MARLOW. [*Perusing*] What's here? For the first course; for the second course; for the dessert. The devil, sir, do you think we have brought down the whole Joiners' Company, or the Corporation of Bedford, to eat up such a supper? Two or three little things, clean and comfortable, will do.

HASTINGS. But let's hear it.

MARLOW. [*Reading*] For the first course at the top, a pig and prune sauce.

HASTINGS. Damn your pig, I say.

MARLOW. And damn your prune sauce, say I.

HARDCASTLE. And yet, gentlemen, to men that are hungry, pig with prune sauce is very good eating.

MARLOW. At the bottom, a calf's tongue and brains.

HASTINGS. Let your brains be knocked out, my good sir; I don't like them.

MARLOW. Or you may clap them on a plate by themselves; I do.

HARDCASTLE. [*Aside*] Their impudence confounds me. [*To them*] Gentlemen, you are my guests; make what alterations you please. Is there anything else you wish to retrench or alter, gentlemen?

MARLOW. Item: a pork pie, a boiled rabbit and sausages, a florentine,[1] a shaking pudding,[2] and a dish of tiff — taff — taffety cream![3]

HASTINGS. Confound your made dishes; I shall be as much at a loss in this house as at a green and yellow dinner at the French ambassador's table. I'm for plain eating.

HARDCASTLE. I'm sorry, gentlemen, that I have nothing you like, but if there be anything you have a particular fancy to —

MARLOW. Why, really, sir, your bill of fare is so exquisite, that any one part of it is full as good as another. Send us what you please. So much for supper. And now to see that our beds are aired, and properly taken care of.

HARDCASTLE. I entreat you'll leave all that to me. You shall not stir a step.

MARLOW. Leave that to you! I protest, sir, you must excuse me; I always look to these things myself.

HARDCASTLE. I must insist, sir, you'll make yourself easy on that head.

MARLOW. You see I'm resolved on it. [*Aside*] A very troublesome fellow this, as ever I met with.

HARDCASTLE. Well, sir, I'm resolved at least to attend you. [*Aside*] This may be modern modesty, but I never saw anything look so like old-fashioned impudence.

[*Exeunt* MARLOW *and* HARDCASTLE.]

HASTINGS. So I find this fellow's civilities begin to grow

[1] A pastry. [2] A jelly.

[3] A dish supposed to resemble the silk called taffeta; Marlow reads the handwriting with difficulty.

troublesome. But who can be angry at those assiduities which are meant to please him? Ha! what do I see? Miss Neville, by all that's happy!

[*Enter* Miss Neville.]

Miss Neville. My dear Hastings! To what unexpected good fortune, to what accident, am I to ascribe this happy meeting?

Hastings. Rather let me ask the same question, as I could never have hoped to meet my dearest Constance at an inn.

Miss Neville. An inn! sure you mistake! my aunt, my guardian, lives here. What could induce you to think this house an inn?

Hastings. My friend, Mr. Marlow, with whom I came down, and I have been sent here as to an inn, I assure you. A young fellow whom we accidentally met at a house hard by directed us hither.

Miss Neville. Certainly it must be one of my hopeful cousin's tricks, of whom you have heard me talk so often; ha! ha! ha! ha!

Hastings. He whom your aunt intends for you? He of whom I have such just apprehensions?

Miss Neville. You have nothing to fear from him, I assure you. You'd adore him if you knew how heartily he despises me. My aunt knows it too, and has undertaken to court me for him, and actually begins to think she has made a conquest.

Hastings. Thou dear dissembler! You must know, my Constance, I have just seized this happy opportunity of my friend's visit here to get admittance into the family. The horses that carried us down are now fatigued with their journey, but they'll soon be refreshed; and then if my dearest girl will trust in her faithful Hastings, we shall soon be landed in France, where even among slaves the laws of marriage[1] are respected.

Miss Neville. I have often told you that though ready to

[1] Slur on George III, who had required that his approval be obtained for any marriage in the royal family (1772).

obey you, I yet should leave my little fortune behind with reluctance. The greatest part of it was left me by my uncle, the India[1] director, and chiefly consists in jewels. I have been for some time persuading my aunt to let me wear them. I fancy I'm very near succeeding. The instant they are put into my possession you shall find me ready to make them and myself yours.

HASTINGS. Perish the baubles! Your person is all I desire. In the meantime, my friend Marlow must not be let into his mistake. I know the strange reserve of his temper is such, that if abruptly informed of it, he would instantly quit the house before our plan was ripe for execution.

MISS NEVILLE. But how shall we keep him in the deception? Miss Hardcastle is just returned from walking; what if we still continue to deceive him? — This, this way —

[*They confer.*]

[*Enter* MARLOW.]

MARLOW. The assiduities of these good people tease me beyond bearing. My host seems to think it ill manners to leave me alone, and so he claps not only himself but his old-fashioned wife on my back. They talk of coming to sup with us, too; and then, I suppose, we are to run the gantlet through all the rest of the family. — What have we got here?

HASTINGS. My dear Charles! Let me congratulate you! — The most fortunate accident! — Who do you think is just alighted?

MARLOW. Cannot guess.

HASTINGS. Our mistresses, boy, Miss Hardcastle and Miss Neville. Give me leave to introduce Miss Constance Neville to your acquaintance. Happening to dine in the neighborhood, they called on their return to take fresh horses here. Miss Hardcastle has just stepped into the next room, and will be back in an instant. Wasn't it lucky? eh!

MARLOW. [*Aside*] I have just been mortified enough of all

[1] The East India Company.

conscience, and here comes something to complete my embarrassment.

HASTINGS. Well! but wasn't it the most fortunate thing in the world?

MARLOW. Oh, yes! Very fortunate — a most joyful encounter. — But our dresses, George, you know, are in disorder — what if we should postpone the happiness till to-morrow — to-morrow at her own house? — It will be every bit as convenient — and rather more respectful. — To-morrow let it be.

[*Offering to go*]

MISS NEVILLE. By no means, sir. Your ceremony will displease her. The disorder of your dress will show the ardor of your impatience. Besides, she knows you are in the house, and will permit you to see her.

MARLOW. Oh, the devil! how shall I support it? Hem! hem! Hastings, you must not go. You are to assist me, you know. I shall be confoundedly ridiculous. Yet, hang it! I'll take courage. Hem!

HASTINGS. Pshaw, man! it's but the first plunge, and all's over. She's but a woman, you know.

MARLOW. And of all women, she that I dread most to encounter!

[*Enter* MISS HARDCASTLE, *as returned from walking, a bonnet, etc.*]

HASTINGS. [*Introducing them*] Miss Hardcastle, Mr. Marlow, I'm proud of bringing two persons of such merit together, that only want to know, to esteem each other.

MISS HARDCASTLE. [*Aside*] Now, for meeting my modest gentleman with a demure face, and quite in his own manner. [*After a pause, in which he appears very uneasy and disconcerted.*] I'm glad of your safe arrival, sir. I'm told you had some accidents by the way.

MARLOW. Only a few, madam. Yes, we had some. Yes, madam, a good many accidents, but should be sorry — madam

— or rather glad of any accidents — that are so agreeably concluded. Hem!

HASTINGS. [*To him*] You never spoke better in your whole life. Keep it up, and I'll insure you the victory.

MISS HARDCASTLE. I'm afraid you flatter, sir. You that have seen so much of the finest company can find little entertainment in an obscure corner of the country.

MARLOW. [*Gathering courage*] I have lived, indeed, in the world, madam; but have kept very little company. I have been but an observer upon life, madam, while others were enjoying it.

MISS NEVILLE. But that, I am told, is the way to enjoy it at last.

HASTINGS. [*To him*] Cicero never spoke better. Once more, and you are confirmed in assurance forever.

MARLOW. [*To him*] Hem! Stand by me, then, and when I'm down, throw in a word or two to set me up again.

MISS HARDCASTLE. An observer, like you, upon life, were, I fear, disagreeably employed, since you must have had much more to censure than to approve.

MARLOW. Pardon me, madam. I was always willing to be amused. The folly of most people is rather an object of mirth than uneasiness.

HASTINGS. [*To him*] Bravo, bravo. Never spoke so well in your whole life. Well, Miss Hardcastle, I see that you and Mr. Marlow are going to be very good company. I believe our being here will but embarrass the interview.

MARLOW. Not in the least, Mr. Hastings. We like your company of all things. [*To him*] Zounds! George, sure you won't go? How can you leave us?

HASTINGS. Our presence will but spoil conversation, so we'll retire to the next room. [*To him*] You don't consider, man, that we are to manage a little *tête-à-tête* of our own.

[*Exeunt.*]

MISS HARDCASTLE. [*After a pause*] But you have not been

wholly an observer, I presume, sir. The ladies, I should hope, have employed some part of your addresses.

MARLOW. [*Relapsing into timidity*] Pardon me, madam, I — I — I — as yet have studied — only — to — deserve them.

MISS HARDCASTLE. And that, some say, is the very worst way to obtain them.

MARLOW. Perhaps so, madam. But I love to converse only with the more grave and sensible part of the sex. — But I'm afraid I grow tiresome.

MISS HARDCASTLE. Not at all, sir; there is nothing I like so much as grave conversation myself: I could hear it forever. Indeed, I have often been surprised how a man of *sentiment* could ever admire those light airy pleasures, where nothing reaches the heart.

MARLOW. It's — a disease — of the mind, madam. In the variety of tastes there must be some who, wanting a relish for — um-a-um.

MISS HARDCASTLE. I understand you, sir. There must be some who, wanting a relish for refined pleasures, pretend to despise what they are incapable of tasting.

MARLOW. My meaning, madam, but infinitely better expressed. And I can't help observing — a —

MISS HARDCASTLE. [*Aside*] Who could ever suppose this fellow impudent upon some occasions? [*To him*] You were going to observe, sir —

MARLOW. I was observing, madam — I protest, madam, I forget what I was going to observe.

MISS HARDCASTLE. [*Aside*] I vow and so do I. [*To him*] You were observing, sir, that in this age of hypocrisy — something about hypocrisy, sir.

MARLOW. Yes, madam. In this age of hypocrisy, there are few who upon strict enquiry do not — a — a — a —

MISS HARDCASTLE. I understand you perfectly, sir.

MARLOW. [*Aside*] Egad! and that's more than I do myself!

MISS HARDCASTLE. You mean that in this hypocritical age there are few that do not condemn in public what they practice in private, and think they pay every debt to virtue when they praise it.

MARLOW. True, madam; those who have most virtue in their mouths have least of it in their bosoms. But I'm sure I tire you, madam.

MISS HARDCASTLE. Not in the least, sir; there's something so agreeable and spirited in your manner, such life and force — pray, sir, go on.

MARLOW. Yes, madam. I was saying — that there are some occasions — when a total want of courage, madam, destroys all the — and puts us — upon a — a — a —

MISS HARDCASTLE. I agree with you entirely, a want of courage upon some occasions assumes the appearance of ignorance, and betrays us when we most want to excel. I beg you'll proceed.

MARLOW. Yes, madam. Morally speaking, madam — but I see Miss Neville expecting us in the next room. I would not intrude for the world.

MISS HARDCASTLE. I protest, sir, I never was more agreeably entertained in all my life. Pray go on.

MARLOW. Yes, madam. I was — but she beckons us to join her. Madam, shall I do myself the honor to attend you?

MISS HARDCASTLE. Well, then, I'll follow.

MARLOW. [*Aside*] This pretty smooth dialogue has done for me. [*Exit.*]

MISS HARDCASTLE. Ha! ha! ha! Was there ever such a sober sentimental interview? I'm certain he scarce looked in my face the whole time. Yet the fellow, but for his unaccountable bashfulness, is pretty well, too. He has good sense, but then so buried in his fears that it fatigues one more than ignorance. If I could teach him a little confidence it would be doing somebody that I know of a piece of service. But who is that somebody? — that, faith, is a question I can scarce answer. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter* TONY *and* MISS NEVILLE, *followed by* MRS. HARDCASTLE *and* HASTINGS.]

TONY. What do you follow me for, cousin Con? I wonder you're not ashamed to be so very engaging.

MISS NEVILLE. I hope, cousin, one may speak to one's own relations and not be to blame.

TONY. Aye, but I know what sort of a relation you want to make me, though; but it won't do. I tell you, cousin Con, it won't do; so I beg you'll keep your distance — I want no nearer relationship.

[*She follows, coquetting him to the back scene.*]

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Well! I vow, Mr. Hastings, you are very entertaining. There's nothing in the world I love to talk of so much as London, and the fashions, though I was never there myself.

HASTINGS. Never there! You amaze me! From your air and manner, I concluded you had been bred all your life either at Ranelagh, St. James's, or Tower Wharf.[1]

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Oh, sir, you're only pleased to say so. We country persons can have no manner at all. I'm in love with the town, and that serves to raise me above some of our neighboring rustics; but who can have a manner, that has never seen the Pantheon, the Grotto Gardens, the Borough, and such places where the nobility chiefly resort? All I can do is to enjoy London at secondhand. I take care to know every *tête-à-tête* from the *Scandalous Magazine*,[2] and have all the fashions as they come out, in a letter from the two Miss Rickets of Crooked Lane. Pray how do you like this head,[3] Mr. Hastings?

HASTINGS. Extremely elegant and *dégagée*,[4] upon my word, madam. Your *friseur*[5] is a Frenchman, I suppose?

[1] Hastings ridicules her ignorance; Tower Wharf, like the Borough of Southwark mentioned below, was a disreputable part of London.

[2] The *Town and Country Magazine*, which published portraits called *Tête-à-Têtes*, with satirical biographies.

[3] headdress. [4] easy, unconstrained. [5] hairdresser.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. I protest, I dressed it myself from a print in the Ladies' Memorandum-book for the last year.

HASTINGS. Indeed. Such a head in a side-box at the Play-house would draw as many gazers as my Lady Mayoress at a City Ball.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. I vow, since inoculation[1] began, there is no such thing to be seen as a plain woman; so one must dress a little particular or one may escape in the crowd.

HASTINGS. But that can never be your case, madam, in any dress. [*Bowing*]

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Yet what signifies *my* dressing when I have such a piece of antiquity by my side as Mr. Hardcastle? All I can say will never argue down a single button from his clothes. I have often wanted him to throw off his great flaxen wig, and where he was bald, to plaster it over like my Lord Pately, with powder.

HASTINGS. You are right, madam; for as among the ladies there are none ugly, so among the men there are none old.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. But what do you think his answer was? Why, with his usual Gothic[2] vivacity, he said I only wanted him to throw off his wig to convert it into a *tête*[3] for my own wearing!

HASTINGS. Intolerable! At your age you may wear what you please, and it must become you.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Pray, Mr. Hastings, what do you take to be the most fashionable age about town?

HASTINGS. Some time ago forty was all the mode; but I'm told the ladies intend to bring up fifty for the ensuing winter.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Seriously? Then I shall be too young for the fashion.

HASTINGS. No lady begins now to put on jewels till she's past

[1] Smallpox was the chief enemy of beauty in that century; see "Henry Esmond," I, ix. Inoculation, introduced in 1718, gradually became common.

[2] barbarous.

[3] false headdress.

forty. For instance, Miss there, in a polite circle, would be considered as a child — as a mere maker of samplers.

Mrs. Hardcastle. And yet Mrs. Niece thinks herself as much a woman and is as fond of jewels as the oldest of us all.

Hastings. Your niece, is she? And that young gentleman, a brother of yours, I should presume?

Mrs. Hardcastle. My son, sir. They are contracted to each other. Observe their little sports. They fall in and out ten times a day, as if they were man and wife already. [*To them*] Well, Tony, child, what soft things are you saying to your cousin Constance this evening?

Tony. I have been saying no soft things, but that it's very hard to be followed about so. Ecod! I've not a place in the house now that's left to myself but the stable.

Mrs. Hardcastle. Never mind him, Con, my dear. He's in another story behind your back.

Miss Neville. There's something generous in my cousin's manner. He falls out before faces to be forgiven in private.

Tony. That's a damned confounded — crack.[1]

Mrs. Hardcastle. Ah! he's a sly one. Don't you think they're like each other about the mouth, Mr. Hastings? The Blenkinsop[2] mouth to a T. They're of a size, too. Back to back, my pretties, that Mr. Hastings may see you. Come, Tony.

Tony. You had as good not make me, I tell you. [*Measuring*]

Miss Neville. O lud! he has almost cracked my head.

Mrs. Hardcastle. Oh, the monster! For shame, Tony. You a man, and behave so!

Tony. If I'm a man, let me have my fortin. Ecod! I'll not be made a fool of no longer.

Mrs. Hardcastle. Is this, ungrateful boy, all that I'm to get for the pains I have taken in your education? I that have rocked you in your cradle, and fed that pretty mouth with a spoon! Did not I work that waistcoat to make you genteel?

[1] lie. [2] Probably her own maiden name.

Did not I prescribe for you every day, and weep while the receipt was operating?

TONY. Ecod! you had reason to weep, for you have been dosing me ever since I was born. I have gone through every receipt in "The Complete Housewife" ten times over; and you have thoughts of coursing me through "Quincy"[1] next spring. But, ecod! I tell you, I'll not be made a fool of no longer.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Wasn't it all for your good, viper? Wasn't it all for your good?

TONY. I wish you'd let me and my good alone, then. Snubbing this way when I'm in spirits! If I'm to have any good, let it come of itself; not to keep dinging it, dinging it into one so.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. That's false; I never see you when you're in spirits. No, Tony, you then go to the alehouse or kennel. I'm never to be delighted with your agreeable, wild notes, unfeeling monster!

TONY. Ecod! Mamma, your own notes are the wildest of the two.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Was ever the like? But I see he wants to break my heart, I see he does.

HASTINGS. Dear madam, permit me to lecture the young gentleman a little. I'm certain I can persuade him to his duty.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Well! I must retire. Come, Constance, my love. You see, Mr. Hastings, the wretchedness of my situation. Was ever poor woman so plagued with a dear, sweet, pretty, provoking, undutiful boy?

[*Exeunt* MRS. HARDCASTLE *and* MISS NEVILLE.]

TONY. [*Singing*] "There was a young man riding by, and fain would have his will. Rang do didlo dee."[2] Don't mind her. Let her cry. It's the comfort of her heart. I have seen her and sister cry over a book for an hour together, and they said they liked the book the better the more it made them cry.

[1] Like "The Complete Housewife," a popular household medical book.

[2] First lines of an old ballad; Tony sings to show his indifference.

HASTINGS. Then you're no friend to the ladies, I find, my pretty young gentleman?

TONY. That's as I find 'um.

HASTINGS. Not to her of your mother's choosing, I dare answer! And yet she appears to me a pretty, well-tempered girl.

TONY. That's because you don't know her as well as I. Ecod! I know every inch about her, and there's not a more bitter cantankerous toad in all Christendom!

HASTINGS. [*Aside*] Pretty encouragement, this, for a lover.

TONY. I have seen her since the height of that. [*Extending his arm*] She has as many tricks as a hare in a thicket or a colt the first day's breaking.

HASTINGS. To me she appears sensible and silent.

TONY. Aye, before company. But when she's with her playmates she's as loud as a hog in a gate.[1]

HASTINGS. But there is a meek modesty about her that charms me.

TONY. Yes, but curb her never so little, she kicks up and you're flung in a ditch.

HASTINGS. Well, but you must allow her a little beauty.—Yes, you must allow her some beauty.

TONY. Bandbox! She's all a made-up thing, mun. Ah! could you but see Bet Bouncer of these parts, you might then talk of beauty. Ecod, she has two eyes as black as sloes, and cheeks as broad and red as a pulpit cushion. She'd make two of she.

HASTINGS. Well, what say you to a friend that would take this bitter bargain off your hand?

TONY. Anon.[2]

HASTINGS. Would you thank him that would take Miss Neville, and leave you to happiness and your dear Betsy?

TONY. Aye; but where is there such a friend, for who would take *her*?

HASTINGS. I am he. If you but assist me, I'll engage to whip her off to France, and you shall never hear more of her.

[1] caught in a gate. [2] again (I don't understand you).

TONY. Assist you! Ecod, I will, to the last drop of my blood. I'll clap a pair of horses to your chaise that shall trundle you off in a twinkling, and maybe get you a part of her fortin besides, in jewels, that you little dream of.

HASTINGS. My dear 'squire, this looks like a lad of spirit.

TONY. Come along then, and you shall see more of my spirit before you have done with me. [*Singing*]

We are the boys
That fears no noise
Where the thundering cannons roar.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT III

SCENE. *Same as in preceding act*

[*Enter* HARDCASTLE.]

HARDCASTLE. What could my old friend Sir Charles mean by recommending his son as the modestest young man in town? To me he appears the most impudent piece of brass that ever spoke with a tongue. He has taken possession of the easy-chair by the fireside already. He took off his boots in the parlor, and desired me to see them taken care of. I'm desirous to know how his impudence affects my daughter. — She will certainly be shocked at it.

[*Enter* MISS HARDCASTLE *plainly dressed.*]

HARDCASTLE. Well, my Kate, I see you have changed your dress as I bid you; and yet, I believe, there was no great occasion.

MISS HARDCASTLE. I find such a pleasure, sir, in obeying your commands that I take care to observe them without ever debating their propriety.

HARDCASTLE. And yet, Kate, I sometimes give you some cause, particularly when I recommended my *modest* gentleman to you as a lover to-day.

Miss Hardcastle. You taught me to expect something extraordinary, and I find the original exceeds the description!

Hardcastle. I was never so surprised in my life! He has quite confounded all my faculties!

Miss Hardcastle. I never saw anything like it — and a man of the world, too!

Hardcastle. Aye, he learned it all abroad. What a fool was I, to think a young man could learn modesty by traveling. He might as soon learn wit[1] at a masquerade.

Miss Hardcastle. It seems all natural to him.

Hardcastle. A good deal assisted by bad company and a French dancing-master.

Miss Hardcastle. Sure, you mistake, papa! a French dancing-master could never have taught him that timid look — that awkward address — that bashful manner —

Hardcastle. Whose look? whose manner, child?

Miss Hardcastle. Mr. Marlow's; his *mauvaise honte*,[2] his timidity, struck me at the first sight.

Hardcastle. Then your first sight deceived you; for I think him one of the most brazen first sights that ever astonished my senses!

Miss Hardcastle. Sure, sir, you rally! I never saw anyone so modest.

Hardcastle. And can you be serious? I never saw such a bouncing, swaggering puppy since I was born. Bully Dawson[3] was but a fool to him.

Miss Hardcastle. Surprising! He met me with a respectful bow, a stammering voice, and a look fixed on the ground.

Hardcastle. He met me with a loud voice, a lordly air, and a familiarity that made my blood freeze again.

Miss Hardcastle. He treated me with diffidence and respect; censured the manners of the age; admired the prudence of girls that never laughed; tired me with apologies for being

[1] wisdom. [2] embarrassment.

[3] A notorious ruffian of Whitefriars, a disreputable section in London.

tiresome; then left the room with a bow and "Madam, I would not for the world detain you."

HARDCASTLE. He spoke to me as if he knew me all his life before; asked twenty questions, and never waited for an answer; interrupted my best remarks with some silly pun; and when I was in my best story of the Duke of Marlborough and Prince Eugene, he asked if I had not a good hand at making punch. Yes, Kate, he asked your father if he was a maker of punch!

MISS HARDCASTLE. One of us must certainly be mistaken.

HARDCASTLE. If he be what he has shown himself, I'm determined he shall never have my consent.

MISS HARDCASTLE. And if he be the sullen thing I take him, he shall never have mine.

HARDCASTLE. In one thing then we are agreed — to reject him.

MISS HARDCASTLE. Yes. But upon conditions. For if you should find him less impudent, and I more presuming; if you find him more respectful, and I more importunate — I don't know — the fellow is well enough for a man. Certainly we don't meet many such at a horse race in the country.

HARDCASTLE. If we should find him so — But that's impossible. The first appearance has done my business. I'm seldom deceived in that.

MISS HARDCASTLE. And yet there may be many good qualities under that first appearance.

HARDCASTLE. Aye, when a girl finds a fellow's outside to her taste, she then sets about guessing the rest of his furniture. With her a smooth face stands for good sense, and a genteel figure for every virtue.

MISS HARDCASTLE. I hope, sir, a conversation begun with a compliment to my good sense won't end with a sneer at my understanding!

HARDCASTLE. Pardon me, Kate. But if young Mr. Brazen can find the art of reconciling contradictions, he may please us both, perhaps.

Miss Hardcastle. And as one of us must be mistaken, what if we go to make further discoveries?

Hardcastle. Agreed. But depend on't I'm in the right.

Miss Hardcastle. And depend on't I'm not much in the wrong. [*Exeunt.*]

[*Enter* Tony *running in with a casket.*]

Tony. Ecod! I have got them. Here they are. My cousin Con's necklaces, bobs,[1] and all. My mother shan't cheat the poor souls out of their fortin neither. Oh, my genus, is that you?

[*Enter* Hastings.]

Hastings. My dear friend, how have you managed with your mother? I hope you have amused her with pretending love for your cousin, and that you are willing to be reconciled at last? Our horses will be refreshed in a short time, and we shall soon be ready to set off.

Tony. And here's something to bear your charges by the way. [*Giving the casket*] Your sweetheart's jewels. Keep them, and hang those, I say, that would rob you of one of them!

Hastings. But how have you procured them from your mother?

Tony. Ask me no questions, and I'll tell you no fibs. I procured them by the rule of thumb. If I had not a key to every drawer in mother's bureau, how could I go to the alehouse so often as I do? An honest man may rob himself of his own at any time.

Hastings. Thousands do it every day. But to be plain with you, Miss Neville is endeavoring to procure them from her aunt this very instant. If she succeeds, it will be the most delicate way at least of obtaining them.

Tony. Well, keep them, till you know how it will be. But I know how it will be well enough; she'd as soon part with the only sound tooth in her head!

[1] pendants.

HASTINGS. But I dread the effects of her resentment, when she finds she has lost them.

TONY. Never you mind her resentment, leave *me* to manage that. I don't value her resentment the bounce of a cracker.[1] Zounds![2] here they are! Morrice! Prance![3]

[*Exit* HASTINGS.]

[*Enter* MRS. HARDCASTLE *and* MISS NEVILLE.]

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Indeed, Constance, you amaze me. Such a girl as you want jewels? It will be time enough for jewels, my dear, twenty years hence, when your beauty begins to want repairs.

MISS NEVILLE. But what will repair beauty at forty will certainly improve it at twenty, madam.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Yours, my dear, can admit of none. That natural blush is beyond a thousand ornaments. Besides, child, jewels are quite out at present. Don't you see half the ladies of our acquaintance, my Lady Killdaylight, and Mrs. Crump, and the rest of them, carry their jewels to town, and bring nothing but paste and marcasites[4] back?

MISS NEVILLE. But who knows, madam, but somebody that shall be nameless would like me best with all my little finery about me?

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Consult your glass, my dear, and then see if, with such a pair of eyes, you want any better sparklers. What do you think, Tony, my dear? Does your cousin Con want any jewels, in your eyes, to set off her beauty?

TONY. That's as thereafter may be.

MISS NEVILLE. My dear aunt, if you knew how it would oblige me.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. A parcel of old-fashioned rose and table-cut[5] things. They would make you look like the court of King

[1] firecracker.
[2] An oath (God's wounds).
[3] Both words here mean "be off."
[4] A cheap mineral used for ornaments.
[5] Cut with large flat surfaces.

Solomon at a puppet show. Besides, I believe I can't readily come at them. They may be missing, for aught I know to the contrary.

TONY. [*Apart to* MRS. HARDCASTLE] Then why don't you tell her so at once, as she's so longing for them? Tell her they're lost. It's the only way to quiet her. Say they're lost, and call me to bear witness.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. [*Apart to* TONY] You know, my dear, I'm only keeping them for you. So if I say they're gone, you'll bear me witness, will you? He! he! he!

TONY. Never fear me. Ecod! I'll say I saw them taken out with my own eyes.

MISS NEVILLE. I desire them but for a day, madam. Just to be permitted to show them as relics, and then they may be locked up again.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. To be plain with you, my dear Constance, if I could find them, you should have them. They're missing, I assure you. Lost, for aught I know; but we must have patience wherever they are.

MISS NEVILLE. I'll not believe it; this is but a shallow pretense to deny me. I know they're too valuable to be so slightly kept, and as you are to answer for the loss.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Don't be alarmed, Constance. If they be lost, I must restore an equivalent. But my son knows they are missing, and not to be found.

TONY. That I can bear witness to. They are missing, and not to be found, I'll take my oath on't!

MRS. HARDCASTLE. You must learn resignation, my dear; for though we lose our fortune, yet we should not lose our patience. See me, how calm I am!

MISS NEVILLE. Aye, people are generally calm at the misfortunes of others.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Now, I wonder a girl of your good sense should waste a thought upon such trumpery. We shall soon find them, and in the meantime you shall make use of my garnets till your jewels be found.

MISS NEVILLE. I detest garnets!

MRS. HARDCASTLE. The most becoming things in the world to set off a clear complexion. You have often seen how well they look upon me. You *shall* have them. [*Exit.*]

MISS NEVILLE. I dislike them of all things. You shan't stir. — Was ever anything so provoking — to mislay my own jewels and force me to wear her trumpery?

TONY. Don't be a fool. If she gives you the garnets, take what you can get. The jewels are your own already. I have stolen them out of her bureau, and she does not know it. Fly to your spark; he'll tell you more of the matter. Leave me to manage her.

MISS NEVILLE. My dear cousin!

TONY. Vanish! She's here, and has missed them already. [*Exit* MISS NEVILLE.]

Zounds! how she fidgets and spits about like a Catherine wheel.[1]

[*Enter* MRS. HARDCASTLE.]

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Confusion! thieves! robbers! We are cheated, plundered, broke open, undone!

TONY. What's the matter, what's the matter, mamma? I hope nothing has happened to any of the good family!

MRS. HARDCASTLE. We are robbed. My bureau has been broke open, the jewels taken out, and I'm undone!

TONY. Oh! is that all? Ha! ha! ha! By the laws, I never saw it better acted in my life. Ecod, I thought you was ruined in earnest, ha, ha, ha!

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Why, boy, I *am* ruined in earnest. My bureau has been broke open, and all taken away.

TONY. Stick to that; ha, ha, ha! stick to that. I'll bear witness, you know; call me to bear witness.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. I tell you, Tony, by all that's precious, the jewels are gone, and I shall be ruined forever.

[1] Rotating fireworks; named from the spiked wheel used in the martyrdom of St. Catherine of Alexandria.

TONY. Sure I know they're gone, and I am to say so.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. My dearest Tony, but hear me. They're gone, I say.

TONY. By the laws, mamma, you make me for to laugh, ha! ha! I know who took them well enough, ha! ha! ha!

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Was there ever such a blockhead, that can't tell the difference between jest and earnest? I tell you I'm not in jest, booby!

TONY. That's right, that's right; you must be in a bitter passion, and then nobody will suspect either of us. I'll bear witness that they are gone.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Was there ever such a cross-grained brute, that won't hear me! Can you bear witness that you're no better than a fool? Was ever poor woman so beset with fools on one hand, and thieves on the other?

TONY. I can bear witness to that.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Bear witness again, you blockhead, you, and I'll turn you out of the room directly. My poor niece, what will become of *her*? Do you laugh, you unfeeling brute, as if you enjoyed my distress?

TONY. I can bear witness to that.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Do you insult me, monster? I'll teach you to vex your mother, I will!

TONY. I can bear witness to that.

[*He runs off; she follows him.*]

[*Enter* MISS HARDCASTLE *and* Maid.]

MISS HARDCASTLE. What an unaccountable creature is that brother of mine, to send them to the house as an inn, ha! ha! I don't wonder at his impudence.

MAID. But what is more, madam, the young gentleman as you passed by in your present dress asked me if you were the barmaid. He mistook you for the barmaid, madam!

MISS HARDCASTLE. Did he? Then as I live I'm resolved to keep up the delusion. Tell me, Pimple, how do you like my

present dress? Don't you think I look something like Cherry in the "Beaux' Stratagem"?[1]

MAID. It's the dress, madam, that every lady wears in the country, but when she visits or receives company.

MISS HARDCASTLE. And are you sure he does not remember my face or person?

MAID. Certain of it!

MISS HARDCASTLE. I vow, I thought so; for though we spoke for some time together, yet his fears were such, that he never once looked up during the interview. Indeed, if he had, my bonnet would have kept him from seeing me.

MAID. But what do you hope from keeping him in his mistake?

MISS HARDCASTLE. In the first place, I shall be *seen*, and that is no small advantage to a girl who brings her face to market. Then I shall perhaps make an acquaintance, and that's no small victory gained over one who never addresses any but the wildest of her sex. But my chief aim is to take my gentleman off his guard, and, like an invisible champion of romance, examine the giant's force before I offer to combat.

MAID. But you are sure you can act your part, and disguise your voice, so that he may mistake that, as he has already mistaken your person?

MISS HARDCASTLE. Never fear me. I think I have got the true bar cant. — Did your honor call? — Attend the Lion[2] there. — Pipes and tobacco for the Angel. — The Lamb has been outrageous this half hour!

MAID. It will do, madam. But he's here. [*Exit* Maid.]

[*Enter* MARLOW.]

MARLOW. What a bawling in every part of the house! I have scarce a moment's repose. If I go to the best room, there I find

[1] Farquhar's comedy, in which Cherry is the landlord's daughter.
[2] Inn rooms were usually named.

my host and his story; if I fly to the gallery,[1] there we have my hostess with her curtsy down to the ground. I have at last got a moment to myself, and now for recollection. [*Walks and muses.*]

Miss Hardcastle. Did you call, sir? did your honor call?

Marlow. [*Musing*] As for Miss Hardcastle, she's too grave and sentimental for me.

Miss Hardcastle. Did your honor call?

[*She still places herself before him, he turning away.*]

Marlow. No, child. [*Musing*] Besides, from the glimpse I had of her, I think she squints.

Miss Hardcastle. I'm sure, sir, I heard the bell ring.

Marlow. No, no. [*Musing*] I have pleased my father, however, by coming down, and I'll to-morrow please myself by returning. [*Taking out his tablets, and perusing*]

Miss Hardcastle. Perhaps the other gentleman called, sir?

Marlow. I tell you, no.

Miss Hardcastle. I should be glad to know, sir. We have such a parcel of servants.

Marlow. No, no, I tell you. [*Looks full in her face.*] Yes, child, I think I did call. I wanted — I wanted — I vow, child, you are vastly handsome.

Miss Hardcastle. O la, sir, you'll make one ashamed.

Marlow. Never saw a more sprightly malicious eye. Yes, yes, my dear, I did call. Have you got any of your — a — what d'ye call it in the house?

Miss Hardcastle. No, sir, we have been out of that these ten days.

Marlow. One may call in this house, I find, to very little purpose. Suppose I should call for a taste, just by way of trial, of the nectar of your lips; perhaps I might be disappointed in that too!

Miss Hardcastle. Nectar? — nectar? that's a liquor there's no call for in these parts. French, I suppose. We keep no French wines here, sir.

[1] The bedrooms opened upon a gallery round an open court. This made the house resemble an inn.

MARLOW. Of true English growth, I assure you.

MISS HARDCASTLE. Then it's odd I should not know it. We brew all sorts of wines in this house, and I have lived here these eighteen years.

MARLOW. Eighteen years! Why, one would think, child, you kept the bar before you were born. How old are you?

MISS HARDCASTLE. O sir, I must not tell my age. They say women and music should never be dated.

MARLOW. To guess at this distance, you can't be much above forty. [*Approaching*] Yet nearer I don't think so much. [*Approaching*] By coming close to some women they look younger still; but when we come very close indeed —

[*Attempting to kiss her*]

MISS HARDCASTLE. Pray, sir, keep your distance. One would think you wanted to know one's age as they do horses', by mark of mouth.

MARLOW. I protest, child, you use me extremely ill. If you keep me at this distance, how is it possible you and I can be ever acquainted?

MISS HARDCASTLE. And who wants to be acquainted with you? I want no such acquaintance, not I. I'm sure you did not treat Miss Hardcastle that was here awhile ago in this obstropalous[1] manner. I'll warrant me, before her you looked dashed, and kept bowing to the ground, and talked for all the world as if you was before a justice of peace.

MARLOW. [*Aside*] Egad! she has hit it, sure enough. [*To her*] In awe of her, child? Ha! ha! ha! A mere awkward, squinting thing! No, no! I find you don't know me. I laughed, and rallied her a little, but I was unwilling to be too severe. No, I could not be too severe, curse me!

MISS HARDCASTLE. O then, sir, you are a favorite, I find, among the ladies?

MARLOW. Yes, my dear, a great favorite. And yet, hang me, I don't see what they find in me to follow. At the Ladies' Club

[1] Used for "obstreperous" (unruly).

in town[1] I'm called their agreeable Rattle. Rattle, child, is not my real name, but one I'm known by. My name is Solomons — Mr. Solomons, my dear, at your service. [*Offering to salute her*]

Miss Hardcastle. Hold, sir; you were introducing me to your club, not to yourself. And you're so great a favorite there, you say?

Marlow. Yes, my dear. There's Mrs. Mantrap, Lady Betty Blackleg, the Countess of Sligo, Mrs. Longhorns, old Miss Biddy Buckskin,[2] and your humble servant, keep up the spirit of the place.

Miss Hardcastle. Then it's a very merry place, I suppose.

Marlow. Yes, as merry as cards, suppers, wine, and old women can make us.

Miss Hardcastle. And their agreeable Rattle, ha! ha! ha!

Marlow. [*Aside*] Egad! I don't quite like this chit. She looks knowing, methinks. You laugh, child?

Miss Hardcastle. I can't but laugh, to think what time they all have for minding their work or their family.

Marlow. [*Aside*] All's well; she don't laugh at me. [*To her*] Do *you* ever work, child?

Miss Hardcastle. Aye, sure. There's not a screen or a quilt in the whole house but what can bear witness to that.

Marlow. Odso! Then you must show me your embroidery. I embroider and draw patterns myself a little. If you want a judge of your work you must apply to me. [*Seizing her hand*]

Miss Hardcastle. Aye, but the colors don't look well by candlelight. You shall see all in the morning. [*Struggling*]

Marlow. And why not now, my angel? Such beauty fires beyond the power of resistance. — Pshaw! the father here! My old luck: I never nicked seven that I did not throw amesace[3] three times following. [*Exit* Marlow.]

[1] The Female Coterie, a fashionable club of men and women, in Albemarle Street.

[2] Said to be Miss Rachel Lloyd, a friend of the author Horace Walpole; he too belonged to the club.

[3] Seven, a lucky throw; amesace (ambsace), both aces, the lowest throw at dice.

[*Enter* HARDCASTLE, *who stands in surprise.*]

HARDCASTLE. So, madam! So I find *this* is your *modest* lover. This is your humble admirer that kept his eyes fixed on the ground, and only adored at humble distance. Kate, Kate, art thou not ashamed to deceive your father so?

MISS HARDCASTLE. Never trust me, dear papa, but he's still the modest man I first took him for; you'll be convinced of it as well as I.

HARDCASTLE. By the hand of my body, I believe his impudence is infectious! Didn't I see him seize your hand? Didn't I see him haul you about like a milkmaid? And now you talk of his respect and his modesty, forsooth!

MISS HARDCASTLE. But if I shortly convince you of his modesty, that he has only the faults that will pass off with time, and the virtues that will improve with age, I hope you'll forgive him.

HARDCASTLE. The girl would actually make one run mad! I tell you I'll not be convinced. I am convinced. He has scarcely been three hours in the house, and he has already encroached on all my prerogatives. You may like his impudence, and call it modesty. But my son-in-law, madam, must have very different qualifications.

MISS HARDCASTLE. Sir, I ask but this night to convince you.

HARDCASTLE. You shall not have half the time, for I have thoughts of turning him out this very hour.

MISS HARDCASTLE. Give me that hour then, and I hope to satisfy you.

HARDCASTLE. Well, an hour let it be then. But I'll have no trifling with your father. All fair and open, do you mind me?

MISS HARDCASTLE. I hope, sir, you have ever found that I considered your commands as my pride; for your kindness is such that my duty as yet has been inclination.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV

SCENE. *Same as in preceding act*

[*Enter* HASTINGS *and* MISS NEVILLE.]

HASTINGS. You surprise me! Sir Charles Marlow expected here this night? Where have you had your information?

MISS NEVILLE. You may depend upon it. I just saw his letter to Mr. Hardcastle, in which he tells him he intends setting out a few hours after his son.

HASTINGS. Then, my Constance, all must be completed before he arrives. He knows me; and should he find me here, would discover my name, and perhaps my designs, to the rest of the family.

MISS NEVILLE. The jewels, I hope, are safe.

HASTINGS. Yes, yes. I have sent them to Marlow, who keeps the keys of our baggage. In the meantime, I'll go to prepare matters for our elopement. I have had the 'squire's promise of a fresh pair of horses; and, if I should not see him again, will write him further directions. [*Exit.*]

MISS NEVILLE. Well, success attend you! In the meantime, I'll go amuse my aunt with the old pretense of a violent passion for my cousin. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter* MARLOW, *followed by a* Servant.]

MARLOW. I wonder what Hastings could mean by sending me so valuable a thing as a casket to keep for him, when he knows the only place I have is the seat of a post-coach at an inn door? Have you deposited the casket with the landlady, as I ordered you? Have you put it into her own hands?

SERVANT. Yes, your honor.

MARLOW. She said she'd keep it safe, did she?

SERVANT. Yes, she said she'd keep it safe enough. She asked me how I came by it, and she said she had a great mind to make me give an account of myself. [*Exit* Servant.]

MARLOW. Ha! ha! ha! They're safe, however. What an unaccountable set of beings have we got amongst! This little barmaid, though, runs in my head most strangely, and drives out the absurdities of all the rest of the family. She's mine, she must be mine, or I'm greatly mistaken!

[*Enter* HASTINGS.]

HASTINGS. Bless me! I quite forgot to tell her that I intended to prepare at the bottom of the garden. Marlow here, and in spirits too!

MARLOW. Give me joy, George! Crown me, shadow me with laurels! Well, George, after all, we modest fellows don't want for success among the women.

HASTINGS. Some women, you mean. But what success has your honor's modesty been crowned with now, that it grows so insolent upon us?

MARLOW. Didn't you see the tempting, brisk, lovely little thing that runs about the house with a bunch of keys to its girdle?

HASTINGS. Well! and what then?

MARLOW. She's mine, you rogue, you. Such fire, such motion, such eyes, such lips — But egad! she would not let me kiss them, though.

HASTINGS. But are you sure, so very sure of her?

MARLOW. Why, man, she talked of showing me her work abovestairs, and I am to improve the pattern.

HASTINGS. But how can *you*, Charles, go about to rob a woman of her honor?

MARLOW. Pshaw! pshaw! we all know the honor of the barmaid of an inn. I don't intend to *rob* her, take my word for it; there's nothing in this house I shan't honestly *pay* for!

HASTINGS. I believe the girl has virtue.

MARLOW. And if she has, I should be the last man in the world that would attempt to corrupt it.

HASTINGS. You have taken care, I hope, of the casket I sent you to lock up. It's in safety?

MARLOW. Yes, yes. It's safe enough. I have taken care of it. But how could you think the seat of a post-coach at the inn door a place of safety? Ah, numskull! I have taken better precautions for you than you did for yourself. — I have —

HASTINGS. What?

MARLOW. I have sent it to the landlady to keep for you.

HASTINGS. To the landlady!

MARLOW. The landlady.

HASTINGS. You did?

MARLOW. I did. She's to be answerable for its forthcoming, you know.

HASTINGS. Yes, she'll bring it forth with a witness.

MARLOW. Wasn't I right? I believe you'll allow that I acted prudently upon this occasion?

HASTINGS. [*Aside*] He must not see my uneasiness.

MARLOW. You seem a little disconcerted, though, methinks. Sure nothing has happened?

HASTINGS. No, nothing. Never was I in better spirits in all my life. And so you left it with the landlady, who, no doubt, very readily undertook the charge?

MARLOW. Rather too readily. For she not only kept the casket, but, through her great precaution, was going to keep the messenger too. Ha! ha! ha!

HASTINGS. He! he! he! They're safe, however.

MARLOW. As a guinea in a miser's purse.

HASTINGS. [*Aside*] So now all hopes of fortune are at an end, and we must set off without it. [*To him*] Well, Charles, I'll leave you to your meditations on the pretty barmaid, and — he! he! he! — may you be as successful for yourself as you have been for me. [*Exit.*]

MARLOW. Thank ye, George; I ask no more. Ha! ha! ha!

[*Enter* HARDCASTLE.]

HARDCASTLE. I no longer know my own house. It's turned all topsy-turvy. His servants have got drunk already. I'll bear

it no longer; and yet, from my respect for his father, I'll be calm. [*To him*] Mr. Marlow, your servant. I'm your very humble servant. [*Bowing low*]

MARLOW. Sir, your humble servant. [*Aside*] What's to be the wonder now?

HARDCASTLE. I believe, sir, you must be sensible, sir, that no man alive ought to be more welcome than your father's son, sir. I hope you think so?

MARLOW. I do, from my soul, sir. I don't want much entreaty. I generally make my father's son welcome wherever he goes.

HARDCASTLE. I believe you do, from my soul, sir. But though I say nothing to your own conduct, that of your servants is insufferable. Their manner of drinking is setting a very bad example in this house, I assure you.

MARLOW. I protest, my very good sir, that's no fault of mine. If they don't drink as they ought, *they* are to blame. I ordered them not to spare the cellar; I did, I assure you. [*To the side scene*] Here, let one of my servants come up. [*To him*] My positive directions were, that as I did not drink myself, they should make up for my deficiencies[1] below.

HARDCASTLE. Then they had your orders for what they do? I'm satisfied!

MARLOW. They had, I assure you. You shall hear from one of themselves.

[*Enter* Servant, *drunk*.]

MARLOW. You, Jeremy! Come forward, sirrah! What were my orders? Were you not told to drink freely, and call for what you thought fit, for the good of the house?

HARDCASTLE. [*Aside*] I begin to lose my patience.

JEREMY. Please your honor, liberty and Fleet Street forever! Though I'm but a servant, I'm as good as another man. I'll drink for no man before supper, sir, dammy! Good liquor will sit upon a good supper, but a good supper will not sit upon — hiccup — upon my conscience, sir.

[1] By running up his bill; he still thinks the house an inn.

MARLOW. You see, my old friend, the fellow is as drunk as he can possibly be. I don't know what you'd have more, unless you'd have the poor devil soused in a beer barrel.

HARDCASTLE. [*Aside*] Zounds! he'll drive me distracted if I contain myself any longer. — Mr. Marlow! Sir, I have submitted to your insolence for more than four hours, and I see no likelihood of its coming to an end. I'm now resolved to be master here, sir, and I desire that you and your drunken pack may leave my house directly.

MARLOW. Leave your house! — Sure, you jest, my good friend! What, when I'm doing what I can to please you?

HARDCASTLE. I tell you, sir, you don't please me; so I desire you'll leave my house.

MARLOW. Sure, you cannot be serious! At this time of night, and such a night? You only mean to banter me.

HARDCASTLE. I tell you, sir, I'm serious; and, now that my passions are roused, I say this house is mine, sir; this house is mine, and I command you to leave it directly.

MARLOW. Ha! ha! ha! A puddle in a storm. I shan't stir a step, I assure you. [*In a serious tone*] This your house, fellow! It's my house. This is my house. Mine, while I choose to stay. What right have you to bid me leave this house, sir? I never met with such impudence, curse me, never in my whole life before!

HARDCASTLE. Nor I, confound me if ever I did. To come to my house, to call for what he likes, to turn me out of my own chair, to insult the family, to order his servants to get drunk, and then to tell me "This house is mine, sir!" By all that's impudent, it makes me laugh. Ha! ha! ha! Pray, sir [*Bantering*], as you take the house, what think you of taking the rest of the furniture? There's a pair of silver candlesticks, and there's a fire-screen, and here's a pair of brazen-nosed bellows; perhaps you may take a fancy to them?

MARLOW. Bring me your bill, sir, bring me your bill, and let's make no more words about it.

HARDCASTLE. There are a set of prints, too. What think you of the "Rake's Progress"[1] for your own apartment?

MARLOW. Bring me your bill, I say, and I'll leave you and your infernal house directly.

HARDCASTLE. Then there's a mahogany table that you may see your own face in.

MARLOW. My bill, I say.

HARDCASTLE. I had forgot the great chair, for your own particular slumbers after a hearty meal.

MARLOW. Zounds! bring me my bill, I say, and let's hear no more on't.

HARDCASTLE. Young man, young man, from your father's letter to me, I was taught to expect a well-bred, modest man as a visitor here, but now I find him no better than a coxcomb and a bully; but he will be down here presently, and shall hear more of it. [*Exit.*]

MARLOW. How's this! Sure, I have not mistaken the house? Everything looks like an inn. The servants cry "Coming!" the attendance is awkward; the barmaid, too, to attend us. But she's here, and will further inform me. Whither so fast, child? A word with you.

[*Enter* MISS HARDCASTLE.]

MISS HARDCASTLE. Let it be short then; I'm in a hurry. [*Aside*] I believe he begins to find out his mistake, but it's too soon quite to undeceive him.

MARLOW. Pray, child, answer me one question. What are you, and what may your business in this house be?

MISS HARDCASTLE. A relation of the family, sir.

MARLOW. What, a poor relation?

MISS HARDCASTLE. Yes, sir; a poor relation appointed to keep the keys, and to see that the guests want nothing in my power to give them.

[1] A series of engravings by Hogarth; also a satirical reference to Marlow's conduct.

MARLOW. That is, you act as the barmaid of this inn.

MISS HARDCASTLE. Inn! O law! — What brought that in your head? One of the best families in the county keep an inn! Ha, ha, ha, old Mr. Hardcastle's house an inn!

MARLOW. Mr. Hardcastle's house! Is this house Mr. Hardcastle's house, child?

MISS HARDCASTLE. Aye, sure. Whose else should it be?

MARLOW. So then all's out, and I have been damnably imposed on. Oh, confound my stupid head, I shall be laughed at over the whole town. I shall be stuck up in caricature in all the print-shops. The *Dullissimo Macaroni*.[1] To mistake this house of all others for an inn, and my father's old friend for an innkeeper! What a swaggering puppy must he take me for! What a silly puppy do I find myself! There again, may I be hanged, my dear, but I mistook you for the barmaid!

MISS HARDCASTLE. Dear me! dear me! I'm sure there's nothing in my *behavior* to put me upon a level with one of that stamp.

MARLOW. Nothing, my dear, nothing. But I was in for a list of blunders, and could not help making you a subscriber. My stupidity saw everything the wrong way. I mistook your assiduity for assurance, and your simplicity for allurement. But it's over — this house I no more show *my* face in!

MISS HARDCASTLE. I hope, sir, I have done nothing to disoblige you. I'm sure I should be sorry to affront any gentleman who has been so polite, and said so many civil things to me. I'm sure I should be sorry [*Pretending to cry*] if he left the family upon my account. I'm sure I should be sorry people said anything amiss, since I have no fortune but my character.

MARLOW. [*Aside*] By heaven, she weeps. This is the first mark of tenderness I ever had from a modest woman, and it touches me. [*To her*] Excuse me, my lovely girl, you are the only

[1] Macaronis were dandies; *dullissimo*, mock-Italian for "stupidest." Such satiric prints had a great sale in London. (See "Yankee Doodle," "And called it macaroni.")

part of the family I leave with reluctance. But to be plain with you, the difference of our birth, fortune, and education, makes an honorable connection impossible; and I can never harbor a thought of seducing simplicity that trusted in my honor, or bringing ruin upon one whose only fault was being too lovely.

MISS HARDCASTLE. [*Aside*] Generous man! I now begin to admire him. [*To him*] But I'm sure my family is as good as Miss Hardcastle's; and though I'm poor, that's no great misfortune to a contented mind, and, until this moment, I never thought that it was bad to want fortune.

MARLOW. And why now, my pretty simplicity?

MISS HARDCASTLE. Because it puts me at a distance from one that, if I had a thousand pound, I would give it all to.

MARLOW. [*Aside*] This simplicity bewitches me, so that if I stay I'm undone. I must make one bold effort, and leave her. [*To her*] Your partiality in my favor, my dear, touches me most sensibly; and were I to live for myself alone, I could easily fix my choice. But I owe too much to the opinion of the world, too much to the authority of a father; so that — I can scarcely speak it — it affects me. Farewell! [*Exit.*]

MISS HARDCASTLE. I never knew half his merit till now. He shall not go, if I have power or art to detain him. I'll still preserve the character in which I stooped to conquer, but will undeceive my papa, who perhaps may laugh him out of his resolution. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter* TONY *and* MISS NEVILLE.]

TONY. Aye, you may steal for yourselves the next time. I have done my duty. She has got the jewels again, that's a sure thing; but she believes it was all a mistake of the servants.

MISS NEVILLE. But, my dear cousin, sure you won't forsake us in this distress? If she in the least suspects that I am going off, I shall certainly be locked up, or sent to my Aunt Pedigree's, which is ten times worse.

TONY. To be sure, aunts of all kinds are damned bad things.

But what can I do? I have got you a pair of horses that will fly like Whistlejacket,[1] and I'm sure you can't say but I have courted you nicely before her face. Here she comes; we must court a bit or two more, for fear she should suspect us.

[*They retire, and seem to fondle.*]

[*Enter* Mrs. Hardcastle.]

Mrs. Hardcastle. Well, I was greatly fluttered, to be sure. But my son tells me it was all a mistake of the servants. I shan't be easy, however, till they are fairly married, and then let her keep her own fortune. But what do I see? — fondling together, as I'm alive! I never saw Tony so sprightly before. Ah, have I caught you, my pretty doves! What, billing, exchanging stolen glances, and broken murmurs! Ah!

Tony. As for murmurs, mother, we grumble a little now and then, to be sure. But there's no love lost between us.

Mrs. Hardcastle. A mere sprinkling, Tony, upon the flame, only to make it burn brighter.

Miss Neville. Cousin Tony promises to give us more of his company at home. Indeed, he shan't leave us any more. It won't leave us, cousin Tony, will it?

Tony. Oh, it's a pretty creature. No, I'd sooner leave my horse in a pound than leave you when you smile upon one so. Your laugh makes you so becoming.

Miss Neville. Agreeable cousin! Who can help admiring that natural humor, that pleasant, broad, red, thoughtless [*Patting his cheek*] — ah! it's a bold face.

Mrs. Hardcastle. Pretty innocence!

Tony. I'm sure I always loved cousin Con's hazel eyes, and her pretty long fingers, that she twists this way and that over the haspicholls[2] like a parcel of bobbins.

Mrs. Hardcastle. Ah, he would charm the bird from the tree. I was never so happy before. My boy takes after his

[1] A famous race horse.

[2] harpsichords.

father, poor Mr. Lumpkin, exactly. The jewels, my dear Con, shall be yours incontinently. You shall have them. Isn't he a sweet boy, my dear? You shall be married to-morrow, and we'll put off the rest of his education, like Dr. Drowsy's sermons, to a fitter opportunity.

[*Enter* DIGGORY.]

DIGGORY. Where's the 'squire? I have got a letter for your worship.

TONY. Give it to my mamma. She reads all my letters first.

DIGGORY. I had orders to deliver it into your own hands.

TONY. Who does it come from?

DIGGORY. Your worship mun ask that of the letter itself.

TONY. I could wish to know, though.

[*Turning the letter, and gazing on it*]

MISS NEVILLE. [*Aside*] Undone, undone! A letter to him from Hastings. I know the hand. If my aunt sees it we are ruined forever. I'll keep her employed a little if I can. [*To* MRS. HARDCASTLE] But I have not told you, madam, of my cousin's smart answer just now to Mr. Marlow. We so laughed — you must know, madam — this way a little, for he must not hear us.

[*They confer.*]

TONY. [*Still gazing*] A damned cramp piece of penmanship as ever I saw in my life. I can read your print-hand very well; but here there are such handles, and shanks, and dashes, that one can scarce tell the head from the tail. "To Anthony Lumpkin, Esquire." It's very odd, I can read the outside of my letters, where my own name is, well enough. But when I come to open it, it's all — buzz. That's hard, very hard; for the inside of the letter is always the cream of the correspondence.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Ha! ha! ha! Very well, very well. And so my son was too hard for the philosopher?

MISS NEVILLE. Yes, madam; but you must hear the rest, madam. A little more this way, or he may hear us. You'll hear how he puzzled him again.

Mrs. Hardcastle. He seems strangely puzzled now himself, methinks.

Tony. [*Still gazing*] A damned up-and-down hand, as if it was disguised in liquor.[1] [*Reading*] "Dear Sir,"— aye, that's that. Then there's an *M*, and a *T*, and an *S*, but whether the next be an *izzard*[2] or an *R*, confound me, I cannot tell!

Mrs. Hardcastle. What's that, my dear? Can I give you any assistance?

Miss Neville. Pray, aunt, let me read it. Nobody reads a cramp hand better than I. [*Twitching the letter from her*] Do you know who it is from?

Tony. Can't tell, except from Dick Ginger the feeder.[3]

Miss Neville. Aye, so it is. [*Pretending to read*] Dear 'Squire, Hoping that you're in health, as I am at this present. The gentlemen of the Shakebag[4] club has cut the gentlemen of Goose-green quite out of feather. The odds — um — odd battle — um — long fighting — um, here, here, it's all about cocks and fighting; it's of no consequence; here, put it up, put it up. [*Thrusting the crumpled letter upon him*]

Tony. But I tell you, miss, it's of all the consequence in the world! I would not lose the rest of it for a guinea. Here, mother, do you make it out? Of no consequence!

[*Giving* Mrs. Hardcastle *the letter*]

Mrs. Hardcastle. How's this! [*Reads.*] "Dear 'Squire, I'm now waiting for Miss Neville, with a post-chaise and pair, at the bottom of the garden, but I find my horses yet unable to perform the journey. I expect you'll assist us with a pair of fresh horses, as you promised. Dispatch is necessary, as the hag,"— aye, the *hag* —"your mother, will otherwise suspect us. Yours, Hastings." Grant me patience. I shall run distracted! My rage chokes me.

Miss Neville. I hope, madam, you'll suspend your resentment for a few moments, and not impute to me any impertinence or sinister design that belongs to another.

[1] drunk.
[2] The letter *Z*.
[3] Feeder of gamecocks.
[4] Apparently a kind of gamecock.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. [*Curtsying very low*] Fine spoken, madam; you are most miraculously polite and engaging, and quite the very pink of courtesy and circumspection, madam. [*Changing her tone*] And you, you great ill-fashioned oaf, with scarce sense enough to keep your mouth shut — were you too joined against me? But I'll defeat all your plots in a moment. As for you, madam, since you have got a pair of fresh horses ready, it would be cruel to disappoint them. So, if you please, instead of running away with your spark, prepare this very moment to run off with me. Your old Aunt Pedigree will keep you secure, I'll warrant me. You too, sir, may mount your horse and guard us upon the way. Here, Thomas, Roger, Diggory! I'll show you that I wish you better than you do yourselves. [*Exit.*]

MISS NEVILLE. So now I'm completely ruined.

TONY. Aye, that's a sure thing.

MISS NEVILLE. What better could be expected from being connected with such a stupid fool — and after all the nods and signs I made him.

TONY. By the laws, miss, it was your own cleverness, and not my stupidity, that did your business. You were so nice and so busy with your Shakebags and Goose-greens, that I thought you could never be making believe.

[*Enter* HASTINGS.]

HASTINGS. So, sir, I find by my servant that you have shown my letter, and betrayed us. Was this well done, young gentleman?

TONY. Here's another. Ask miss there who betrayed you. Ecod, it was her doing, not mine.

[*Enter* MARLOW.]

MARLOW. So I have been finely used here among you. Rendered contemptible, driven into ill manners, despised, insulted, laughed at.

TONY. Here's another. We shall have old Bedlam[1] broke loose presently.

MISS NEVILLE. And there, sir, is the gentleman to whom we all owe every obligation.

MARLOW. What can I say to him, a mere boy, an idiot, whose ignorance and age are a protection?

HASTINGS. A poor contemptible booby, that would but disgrace correction.

MISS NEVILLE. Yet with cunning and malice enough to make himself merry with all our embarrassments.

HASTINGS. An insensible cub.

MARLOW. Replete with tricks and mischief.

TONY. Baw! damme, but I'll fight you both one after the other — with baskets.[2]

MARLOW. As for him, he's below resentment. But your conduct, Mr. Hastings, requires an explanation. You knew of my mistakes, yet would not undeceive me.

HASTINGS. Tortured as I am with my own disappointments, is this a time for explanations? It is not friendly, Mr. Marlow.

MARLOW. But, sir —

MISS NEVILLE. Mr. Marlow, we never kept on your mistake till it was too late to undeceive you. Be pacified.

[*Enter* Servant.]

SERVANT. My mistress desires you'll get ready immediately, madam. The horses are putting to. Your hat and things are in the next room. We are to go thirty miles before morning.

[*Exit* Servant.]

MISS NEVILLE. Well, well; I'll come presently.

MARLOW. [*To* HASTINGS] Was it well done, sir, to assist in rendering me ridiculous? — to hang me out for the scorn of

[1] wild uproar (*from the hospital of St. Mary of Bethlehem, in London, long used as a lunatic asylum*).

[2] Long sticks with basket hilts; singlesticks.

all my acquaintance? Depend upon it, sir, I shall expect an explanation.

HASTINGS. Was it well done, sir, if you're upon that subject, to deliver what I intrusted to yourself to the care of another, sir?

MISS NEVILLE. Mr. Hastings! Mr. Marlow! Why will you increase my distress by this groundless dispute? I implore, I entreat you —

[*Enter* Servant.]

SERVANT. Your cloak, madam. My mistress is impatient.

MISS NEVILLE. I come.

[*Exit* Servant.]

Pray be pacified; if I leave you thus, I shall die with apprehension.

[*Enter* Servant.]

SERVANT. Your fan, muff, and gloves, madam. The horses are waiting.

MISS NEVILLE. O Mr. Marlow! if you knew what a scene of constraint and ill-nature lies before me, I'm sure it would convert your resentment into pity.

MARLOW. I'm so distracted with a variety of passions that I don't know what I do. Forgive me, madam. George, forgive me. You know my hasty temper, and should not exasperate it.

HASTINGS. The torture of my situation is my only excuse.

MISS NEVILLE. Well, my dear Hastings, if you have that esteem for me that I think, that I am sure, you have, your constancy for three years will but increase the happiness of our future connection. If —

MRS. HARDCASTLE. [*Within*] Miss Neville. Constance — why, Constance, I say.

MISS NEVILLE. I'm coming. Well, constancy. Remember, constancy is the word.

[*Exit followed by* Servant.]

HASTINGS. My heart! How can I support this? To be so near happiness, and such happiness!

MARLOW. [*To* TONY] You see now, young gentleman, the effects of your folly. What might be amusement to you is here disappointment, and even distress.

TONY. [*From a reverie*] Ecod, I have hit it. It's here. Your hands! Yours and yours, my poor Sulky.— My boots there, ho! Meet me two hours hence at the bottom of the garden; and if you don't find Tony Lumpkin a more good-natured fellow than you thought for, I'll give you leave to take my best horse, and Bet Bouncer into the bargain!— Come along. My boots, ho!

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT V

SCENE I. *Same as in preceding act*

[*Enter* HASTINGS *and* Servant.]

HASTINGS. You saw the old lady and Miss Neville drive off, you say?

SERVANT. Yes, your honor. They went off in a post-coach, and the young 'squire went on horseback. They're thirty miles off by this time.

HASTINGS. Then all my hopes are over.

SERVANT. Yes, sir. Old Sir Charles is arrived. He and the old gentleman of the house have been laughing at Mr. Marlow's mistake this half-hour. They are coming this way.

HASTINGS. Then I must not be seen. So now to my fruitless appointment at the bottom of the garden. This is about the time. [*Exeunt.*]

[*Enter* SIR CHARLES *and* HARDCASTLE.]

HARDCASTLE. Ha! ha! ha! The peremptory tone in which he sent forth his sublime commands!

SIR CHARLES. And the reserve with which I suppose he treated all your advances.

HARDCASTLE. And yet he might have seen something in me above a common innkeeper, too.

SIR CHARLES. Yes, Dick, but he mistook you for an uncommon innkeeper, ha! ha! ha!

HARDCASTLE. Well, I'm in too good spirits to think of anything but joy. Yes, my dear friend, this union of our families will make our personal friendships hereditary; and though my daughter's fortune is but small —

SIR CHARLES. Why, Dick, will you talk of fortune to me? My son is possessed of more than a competence already, and can want nothing but a good and virtuous girl to share his happiness and increase it. If they like each other, as you say they do—

HARDCASTLE. *If*, man! I tell you they *do* like each other. My daughter as good as told me so.

SIR CHARLES. But girls are apt to flatter themselves, you know.

HARDCASTLE. I saw him grasp her hand in the warmest manner myself; and here he comes to put you out of your *ifs*, I warrant him.

[*Enter* MARLOW.]

MARLOW. I come, sir, once more, to ask pardon for my strange conduct. I can scarce reflect on my insolence without confusion.

HARDCASTLE. Tut, boy, a trifle! You take it too gravely. An hour or two's laughing with my daughter will set all to rights again. She'll never like you the worse for it.

MARLOW. Sir, I shall be always proud of her approbation.

HARDCASTLE. Approbation is but a cold word, Mr. Marlow; if I am not deceived, you have something more than approbation thereabouts. You take me?

MARLOW. Really, sir, I have not that happiness.

HARDCASTLE. Come, boy, I'm an old fellow, and know what's what as well as you that are younger. I know what has passed between you; but mum.

MARLOW. Sure, sir, nothing has passed between us but the most profound respect on my side and the most distant reserve

on hers. You don't think, sir, that my impudence has been passed upon all the rest of the family!

HARDCASTLE. Impudence! No, I don't say that — not quite impudence — though girls like to be played with, and rumpled a little too, sometimes. But she has told no tales, I assure you.

MARLOW. I never gave her the slightest cause.

HARDCASTLE. Well, well, I like modesty in its place well enough. But this is overacting, young gentleman. You may be open. Your father and I will like you the better for it.

MARLOW. May I die, sir, if I ever —

HARDCASTLE. I tell you, she don't dislike you; and as I'm sure you like her —

MARLOW. Dear sir — I protest, sir —

HARDCASTLE. I see no reason why you should not be joined as fast as the parson can tie you.

MARLOW. But hear me, sir —

HARDCASTLE. Your father approves the match, I admire it, every moment's delay will be doing mischief, so —

MARLOW. But why won't you hear me? By all that's just and true, I never gave Miss Hardcastle the slightest mark of my attachment, or even the most distant hint to suspect me of affection. We had but one interview, and that was formal, modest, and uninteresting.

HARDCASTLE. [*Aside*] This fellow's formal, modest impudence is beyond bearing.

SIR CHARLES. And you never grasped her hand, or made any protestations!

MARLOW. As heaven is my witness, I came down[1] in obedience to your commands. I saw the lady without emotion, and parted without reluctance. I hope you'll exact no further proofs of my duty, nor prevent me from leaving a house in which I suffer so many mortifications. [*Exit.*]

SIR CHARLES. I'm astonished at the air of sincerity with which he parted.

[1] In England "down" is from London, "up" is to London.

HARDCASTLE. And I'm astonished at the deliberate intrepidity of his assurance.

SIR CHARLES. I dare pledge my life and honor upon his truth.

HARDCASTLE. Here comes my daughter, and I would stake my happiness upon her veracity.

[*Enter* MISS HARDCASTLE.]

HARDCASTLE. Kate, come hither, child. Answer us sincerely, and without reserve; has Mr. Marlow made you any professions of love and affection?

MISS HARDCASTLE. The question is very abrupt, sir. But since you require unreserved sincerity, I think he has.

HARDCASTLE. [*To* SIR CHARLES] You see.

SIR CHARLES. And pray, madam, have you and my son had more than one interview?

MISS HARDCASTLE. Yes, sir, several.

HARDCASTLE. [*To* SIR CHARLES] You see.

SIR CHARLES. But did he profess any attachment?

MISS HARDCASTLE. A lasting one.

SIR CHARLES. Did he talk of love?

MISS HARDCASTLE. Much, sir.

SIR CHARLES. Amazing! And all this formally?

MISS HARDCASTLE. Formally.

HARDCASTLE. Now, my friend, I hope you are satisfied.

SIR CHARLES. And how did he behave, madam?

MISS HARDCASTLE. As most professed admirers do. Said some civil things of my face, talked much of his want of merit and the greatness of mine, mentioned his heart, gave a short tragedy speech, and ended with pretended rapture.

SIR CHARLES. Now I'm perfectly convinced, indeed. I know his conversation among women to be modest and submissive. This forward, canting,[1] ranting manner by no means describes him, and I am confident he never sat for the picture.

[1] hypocritical.

Miss Hardcastle. Then what, sir, if I should convince you to your face of my sincerity? If you and my papa, in about half an hour, will place yourselves behind that screen, you shall hear him declare his passion to me in person.

Sir Charles. Agreed. And if I find him what you describe, all my happiness in him must have an end.

[*Exeunt.*]

Miss Hardcastle. And if you don't find him what I describe — I fear my happiness must never have a beginning.

[*Exit.*]

Scene II. *The back of the garden*

[*Enter* Hastings.]

Hastings. What an idiot am I, to wait here for a fellow who probably takes a delight in mortifying me! He never intended to be punctual, and I'll wait no longer. What do I see? It is he, and perhaps with news of my Constance.

[*Enter* Tony, *booted and spattered.*]

Hastings. My honest 'squire! I now find you a man of your word. This looks like friendship.

Tony. Aye, I'm your friend, and the best friend you have in the world, if you knew but all. This riding by night, by the bye, is cursedly tiresome. It has shook me worse than the basket of a stagecoach.

Hastings. But how? Where did you leave your fellow travelers? Are they in safety? Are they housed?

Tony. Five and twenty miles in two hours and a half is no such bad driving. The poor beasts have smoked for it. Rabbit me, but I'd rather ride forty miles after a fox than ten with such varmint.[1]

[1] vermin (*mammals and birds injurious to game and crops; such as foxes, rats, moles, owls, etc.*).

HASTINGS. Well, but where have you left the ladies? I die with impatience.

TONY. Left them? Why, where should I leave them but where I found them?

HASTINGS. This is a riddle.

TONY. Riddle me this,[1] then. What's that goes round the house and round the house, and never touches the house?

HASTINGS. I'm still astray.

TONY. Why, that's it, mon. I have led them astray. By jingo, there's not a pond or slough within five miles of the place but they can tell the taste of.

HASTINGS. Ha, ha, ha, I understand; you took them in a round while they supposed themselves going forward. And so you have at last brought them home again.

TONY. You shall hear. I first took them down Feather-bed Lane, where we stuck fast in the mud. I then rattled them crack over the stones of Up-and-down Hill. I then introduced them to the gibbet on Heavy-tree Heath, and from that, with a circumbendibus,[2] I fairly lodged them in the horsepond at the bottom of the garden.

HASTINGS. But no accident, I hope?

TONY. No, no. Only mother is confoundedly frightened. She thinks herself forty miles off. She's sick of the journey, and the cattle can scarce crawl. So if your own horses be ready, you may whip off with cousin, and I'll be bound that no soul here can budge a foot to follow you.

HASTINGS. My dear friend, how can I be grateful?

TONY. Aye, now it's dear friend, noble 'squire. Just now, it was all idiot, cub, and run me through the guts. Damn *your* way of fighting, I say. After we take a knock in this part of the country, we kiss and be friends. But if you had run me through the guts, then I should be dead and you might go kiss the hangman.

HASTINGS. The rebuke is just. But I must hasten to relieve

[1] Solve this riddle. [2] roundabout method (*a humorous word*).

Miss Neville; if you keep the old lady employed, I promise to take care of the young one. [*Exit* HASTINGS.]

TONY. Never fear me. Here she comes. Vanish. She's got from the pond, and draggled up to the waist like a mermaid.

[*Enter* MRS. HARDCASTLE.]

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Oh, Tony, I'm killed! Shook! Battered to death! I shall never survive it. That last jolt that laid us against the quickset[1] hedge has done my business.

TONY. Alack, mamma, it was all your own fault. You would be for running away by night, without knowing one inch of the way.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. I wish we were at home again. I never met so many accidents in so short a journey. Drenched in the mud, overturned in a ditch, stuck fast in a slough, jolted to a jelly, and at last to lose our way! Whereabouts do you think we are, Tony?

TONY. By my guess we should be upon Crackskull Common,[2] about forty miles from home.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. O lud! O lud! the most notorious spot in all the country. We only want a robbery to make a complete night on't.

TONY. Don't be afraid, mamma, don't be afraid. Two of the five that kept here[3] are hanged, and the other three may not find us. Don't be afraid. — Is that a man that's galloping behind us? No; it's only a tree. Don't be afraid.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. The fright will certainly kill me.

TONY. Do you see anything like a black hat moving behind the thicket?

MRS. HARDCASTLE. O death!

TONY. No, it's only a cow. Don't be afraid, mamma, don't be afraid.

[1] Hedge set with quick (living) shrubs.
[2] Uninclosed waste land, such as highwaymen frequented.
[3] stayed here, resorted here.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. As I'm alive, Tony, I see a man coming toward us. Ah! I'm sure on't. If he perceives us, we are undone.

TONY. [*Aside*] Father-in-law, by all that's unlucky, come to take one of his night walks. [*To her*] Ah, it's a highwayman, with pistols as long as my arm. A damned ill-looking fellow.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Good Heaven defend us! He approaches.

TONY. Do you hide yourself in that thicket, and leave me to manage him. If there be any danger, I'll cough and cry, "hem." When I cough be sure to keep close.

[MRS. HARDCASTLE *hides behind a tree in the back scene.*]

[*Enter* HARDCASTLE.]

HARDCASTLE. I'm mistaken, or I heard voices of people in want of help. Oh, Tony, is that you? I did not expect you so soon back. Are your mother and her charge in safety?

TONY. Very safe, sir, at my Aunt Pedigree's. Hem.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. [*From behind*] Ah! I find there's danger.

HARDCASTLE. Forty miles in three hours; sure, that's too much, my youngster.

TONY. Stout horses and willing minds make short journeys, as they say. Hem.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. [*From behind*] Sure, he'll do the dear boy no harm.

HARDCASTLE. But I heard a voice here; I should be glad to know from whence it came.

TONY. It was I, sir, talking to myself, sir. I was saying that forty miles in four hours[1] was very good going. Hem. As to be sure it was. Hem. I have got a sort of cold by being out in the air. We'll go in if you please. Hem.

HARDCASTLE. But if you talked to yourself, you did not answer yourself. I am certain I heard two voices, and am resolved [*Raising his voice*] to find the other out.

[1] Tony lengthens the time to make his story seem probable.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. [*From behind*] Oh! he's coming to find me out. Oh!

TONY. What need you go, sir, if I tell you? Hem. I'll lay down my life for the truth — hem — I'll tell you all, sir.

[*Detaining him*]

HARDCASTLE. I tell you I will not be detained. I insist on seeing. It's in vain to expect I'll believe you.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. [*Running forward from behind*] O lud, he'll murder my poor boy, my darling. Here, good gentleman, whet your rage upon me. Take my money, my life, but spare that young gentleman, spare my child, if you have any mercy.

HARDCASTLE. My wife! as I'm a Christian. From whence can she come, or what does she mean?

MRS. HARDCASTLE. [*Kneeling*] Take compassion on us, good Mr. Highwayman. Take our money, our watches, all we have, but spare our lives. We will never bring you to justice, indeed we won't, good Mr. Highwayman.

HARDCASTLE. I believe the woman 's out of her senses. What, Dorothy, don't you know *me*?

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Mr. Hardcastle, as I'm alive! My fears blinded me. But who, my dear, could have expected to meet you here, in this frightful place, so far from home. What has brought you to follow us?

HARDCASTLE. Sure, Dorothy, you have not lost your wits! So far from home, when you are within forty yards of your own door! [*To him*] This is one of your old tricks, you graceless rogue, you! [*To her*] Don't you know the gate, and the mulberry tree; and don't you remember the horsepond, my dear?

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Yes, I shall remember the horsepond as long as I live; I have caught my death in it. [*To* TONY] And is it to you, you graceless varlet, I owe all this? I'll teach you to abuse your mother, I will.

TONY. Ecod, mother, all the parish says you have spoiled me. and so you may take the fruits on't.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. I'll spoil you, I will.

[*Follows him off the stage. Exeunt.*]

HARDCASTLE. There's morality, however, in his reply. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter* HASTINGS *and* MISS NEVILLE.]

HASTINGS. My dear Constance, why will you deliberate thus? If we delay a moment, all is lost forever. Pluck up a little resolution, and we shall soon be out of the reach of her malignity.

MISS NEVILLE. I find it impossible. My spirits are so sunk with the agitations I have suffered that I am unable to face any new danger. Two or three years' patience will at last crown us with happiness.

HASTINGS. Such a tedious delay is worse than inconstancy. Let us fly, my charmer. Let us date our happiness from this very moment. Perish fortune! Love and content will increase what we possess beyond a monarch's revenue. Let me prevail.

MISS NEVILLE. No, Mr. Hastings, no. Prudence once more comes to my relief, and I will obey its dictates. In the moment of passion, fortune may be despised, but it ever produces a lasting repentance. I'm resolved to apply to Mr. Hardcastle's compassion and justice for redress.

HASTINGS. But though he had the will, he has not the power to relieve you.

MISS NEVILLE. But he has influence, and upon that I am resolved to rely.

HASTINGS. I have no hopes. But since you persist, I must reluctantly obey you.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. *Living-room of Hardcastle's house*

[*Enter* SIR CHARLES *and* MISS HARDCASTLE.]

SIR CHARLES. What a situation am I in! If what you say appears, I shall then find a guilty son. If what he says be true, I shall then lose one that, of all others, I most wished for a daughter.

Miss Hardcastle. I am proud of your approbation; and to show I merit it, if you place yourselves as I directed, you shall hear his explicit declaration. But he comes.

Sir Charles. I'll to your father, and keep him to the appointment. [*Exit* Sir Charles.]

[*Enter* Marlow.]

Marlow. Though prepared for setting out, I come once more to take leave; nor did I till this moment know the pain I feel in the separation.

Miss Hardcastle. [*In her own natural manner*] I believe these sufferings cannot be very great, sir, which you can so easily remove. A day or two longer, perhaps, might lessen your uneasiness, by showing the little value of what you think proper to regret.

Marlow. [*Aside*] This girl every moment improves upon me. [*To her*] It must not be, madam. I have already trifled too long with my heart. My very pride begins to submit to my passion. The disparity of education and fortune, the anger of a parent, and the contempt of my equals begin to lose their weight; and nothing can restore me to myself but this painful effort of resolution.

Miss Hardcastle. Then go, sir. I'll urge nothing more to detain you. Though my family be as good as hers you came down to visit, and my education, I hope, not inferior, what are these advantages without equal affluence? I must remain contented with the slight approbation of imputed merit; I must have only the mockery of your addresses, while all your serious aims are fixed on fortune.

[*Enter* Hardcastle *and* Sir Charles *from behind.*]

Sir Charles. Here, behind this screen.

Hardcastle. Aye, aye, make no noise. I'll engage my Kate covers him with confusion at last.

MARLOW. By heavens, madam, fortune was ever my smallest consideration. Your beauty at first caught my eye; for who could see that without emotion? But every moment that I converse with you steals in some new grace, heightens the picture, and gives it stronger expression. What at first seemed rustic plainness now appears refined simplicity. What seemed forward assurance now strikes me as the result of courageous innocence and conscious virtue.

SIR CHARLES. What can it mean? He amazes me!

HARDCASTLE. I told you how it would be. Hush!

MARLOW. I am now determined to stay, madam; and I have too good an opinion of my father's discernment, when he sees you, to doubt his approbation.

MISS HARDCASTLE. No, Mr. Marlow, I will not, cannot, detain you. Do you think I could suffer a connection in which there is the smallest room for repentance? Do you think I would take the mean advantage of a transient passion to load you with confusion? Do you think I could ever relish that happiness which was acquired by lessening yours?

MARLOW. By all that's good, I can have no happiness but what's in your power to grant me. Nor shall I ever feel repentance but in not having seen your merits before. I will stay, even contrary to your wishes; and though you should persist to shun me, I will make my respectful assiduities atone for the levity of my past conduct.

MISS HARDCASTLE. Sir, I must entreat you'll desist. As our acquaintance began, so let it end, in indifference. I might have given an hour or two to levity; but seriously, Mr. Marlow, do you think I could ever submit to a connection where *I* must appear mercenary, and *you* imprudent? Do you think I could ever catch at the confident addresses of a secure admirer?

MARLOW. [*Kneeling*] Does this look like security? Does this look like confidence? No, madam, every moment that shows me your merit, only serves to increase my diffidence and confusion. Here let me continue —

Sir Charles. I can hold it no longer. Charles, Charles, how hast thou deceived me! Is this your indifference, your uninteresting conversation!

Hardcastle. Your cold contempt! your formal interview! What have you to say now?

Marlow. That I'm all amazement! What can it mean?

Hardcastle. It means that you can say and unsay things at pleasure. That you can address a lady in private and deny it in public; that you have one story for us and another for my daughter!

Marlow. Daughter! — this lady your daughter?

Hardcastle. Yes, sir, my only daughter. My Kate, whose else should she be?

Marlow. Oh, the devil.

Miss Hardcastle. Yes, sir, that very identical, tall, squinting lady you were pleased to take me for. [*Curtsying*] She that you addressed as the mild, modest, sentimental man of gravity, and the bold, forward, agreeable Rattle of the Ladies' Club. Ha, ha, ha!

Marlow. Zounds, there's no bearing this; it's worse than death!

Miss Hardcastle. In which of your characters, sir, will you give us leave to address you? As the faltering gentleman, with looks on the ground, that speaks just to be heard and hates hypocrisy; or the loud, confident creature, that keeps it up with Mrs. Mantrap and old Miss Biddy Buckskin till three in the morning? Ha, ha, ha!

Marlow. Oh, curse on my noisy head. I never attempted to be impudent yet, that I was not taken down. I must be gone.

Hardcastle. By the hand of my body, but you shall not. I see it was all a mistake, and I am rejoiced to find it. You shall not, sir, I tell you. I know she'll forgive you. Won't you forgive him, Kate? We'll all forgive you. Take courage, man.

[*They retire, she tormenting him to the back scene.*]

[*Enter* MRS. HARDCASTLE *and* TONY.]

MRS. HARDCASTLE. So, so, they're gone off. Let them go, I care not.

HARDCASTLE. Who gone?

MRS. HARDCASTLE. My dutiful niece and her gentleman, Mr. Hastings, from town — he who came down with our modest visitor here.

SIR CHARLES. Who, my honest George Hastings? As worthy a fellow as lives, and the girl could not have made a more prudent choice.

HARDCASTLE. Then, by the hand of my body, I'm proud of the connection.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Well, if he has taken away the lady, he has not taken her fortune; that remains in this family to console us for her loss.

HARDCASTLE. Sure, Dorothy, you would not be so mercenary?

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Aye, that's my affair, not yours.

HARDCASTLE. But you know if your son, when of age, refuses to marry his cousin, her whole fortune is then at her own disposal.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Aye, but he's not of age, and she has not thought proper to wait for his refusal.

[*Enter* HASTINGS *and* MISS NEVILLE.]

MRS. HARDCASTLE. [*Aside*] What! returned so soon? I begin not to like it.

HASTINGS. [*To* HARDCASTLE] For my late attempt to fly off with your niece, let my present confusion be my punishment. We are now come back to appeal from your justice to your humanity. By her father's consent I first paid her my addresses, and our passions were first founded in duty.

MISS NEVILLE. Since his death I have been obliged to stoop to dissimulation to avoid oppression. In an hour of levity I was

ready even to give up my fortune to secure my choice. But I'm now recovered from the delusion, and hope from your tenderness what is denied me from a nearer connection.

MRS. HARDCASTLE. Pshaw, pshaw! this is all but the whining end of a modern novel.[1]

HARDCASTLE. Be it what it will, I'm glad they're come back to reclaim their due. Come hither, Tony, boy. Do you refuse this lady's hand whom I now offer you?

TONY. What signifies my refusing? You know I can't refuse her till I'm of age, father.

HARDCASTLE. While I thought concealing your age, boy, was likely to conduce to your improvement, I concurred with your mother's desire to keep it secret. But since I find she turns it to a wrong use, I must now declare you have been of age these three months.

TONY. Of age! Am I of age, father?

HARDCASTLE. Above three months.

TONY. Then you'll see the first use I'll make of my liberty. [*Taking* MISS NEVILLE'S *hand*] Witness all men by these presents, that I, Anthony Lumpkin, Esquire, of BLANK[2] place, refuse you, Constantia Neville, spinster, of no place at all, for my true and lawful wife. So Constance Neville may marry whom she pleases, and Tony Lumpkin is his own man again!

SIR CHARLES. O brave 'squire!

HASTINGS. My worthy friend!

MRS. HARDCASTLE. My undutiful offspring!

MARLOW. Joy, my dear George! I give you joy sincerely. And could I prevail upon my little tyrant here to be less arbitrary, I should be the happiest man alive if you would return me the favor.

HASTINGS. [*To* MISS HARDCASTLE] Come, madam, you are

[1] Novels were popular after Richardson's "Pamela" (1740). Goldsmith disliked novels, although he wrote "The Vicar of Wakefield" (1766).

[2] Burlesquing a legal document; also alluding to the withholding of his inheritance by his mother.

now driven to the very last scene of all your contrivances. I know you like him, I'm sure he loves you, and you must and shall have him.

HARDCASTLE. [*Joining their hands*] And I say so, too. And Mr. Marlow, if she makes as good a wife as she has a daughter, I don't believe you'll ever repent your bargain. So now to supper! To-morrow we shall gather all the poor of the parish about us, and the Mistakes of the Night shall be crowned with a merry morning. So, boy, take her; as you have been mistaken in the mistress, my wish is that you may never be mistaken in the wife.

EPILOGUE[1]

Well, having Stooped to Conquer with success,
And gained a husband without aid from dress,
Still as a barmaid, I could wish it too,
As I have conquered him to conquer you;
And let me say, for all your resolution,
That pretty barmaids have done execution.
Our life is all a play, composed to please;
"We have our exits and our entrances."[2]
The first act shows the simple country maid,
Harmless and young, of everything afraid;
Blushes when hired, and with unmeaning action,
"I hopes as how to give you satisfaction."
Her second act displays a livelier scene, —
Th'unblushing barmaid of a country inn,
Who whisks about the house, at market caters,
Talks loud, coquets the guests, and scolds the waiters.
Next the scene shifts to town, and there she soars,
The chophouse toast of ogling connoisseurs.

[1] Spoken by Miss Hardcastle (acted by Mrs. Bulkley).

[2] These lines are patterned after Shakespeare's "seven ages" ("As You Like It," II, vii, 138–165).

On 'squires and cits[1] she there displays her arts,
And on the gridiron broils her lovers' hearts—
And as she smiles, her triumphs to complete,
Even Common Councilmen forget to eat.
The fourth act shows her wedded to the 'squire,
And madam now begins to hold it higher;
Pretends to taste, at operas cries "*Caro!*"[2]
And quits her "Nancy Dawson,"[3] for "*Che Faro,*"[4]
Dotes upon dancing, and in all her pride
Swims round the room, the Heinel[5] of Cheapside[6];
Ogles and leers with artificial skill,
Till having lost in age the power to kill,
She sits all night at cards, and ogles at spadille.[7]
Such, through our lives, the eventful history.
The fifth and last act still remains for me.
The barmaid now for your protection prays,
Turns female barrister, and pleads for Bayes.[8]

EPILOGUE[9]

To be spoken in the Character of Tony Lumpkin

By J. Craddock, Esq.

Well — now all's ended, and my comrades gone,
Pray, what becomes of mother's nonly[10] son?
A hopeful blade, in town I'll fix my station,
And try to make a bluster in the nation.

[1] citizens (*used in contempt*). [2] Bravo! [3] Popular song.
[4] An air in Glück's opera "Orfeo."
[5] A dancer popular at this time.
[6] A short street in the old city of London; famous for its shops.
[7] the ace of spades.
[8] The dramatist. See the epilogue of Dryden's "All for Love."
[9] This came too late to be spoken.
[10] only.

As for my cousin Neville, I renounce her;
Off — in a crack — I'll carry big Bet Bouncer.
Why should I not in the great world appear?
I soon shall have a thousand pounds a year.
No matter what a man may here inherit,
In London, gad, they've some regard to spirit.
I see the horses prancing up the streets,
And big Bet Bouncer bobs to all she meets,
Then hikes to jigs and pastimes ev'ry night —
Not to the play; they say it a'n't polite;
To Sadlers' Wells,[1] perhaps, or operas go,
And once, by chance, to the roratorio.[2]
Thus here and there, forever up and down,
We'll set the fashion, too, to half the town;
And then, at auctions — money ne'er regard;
Buy pictures like the great — ten pounds a yard.
Zounds! we shall make these London gentry say,
We know what's damned genteel as well as they.

[1] At this time a place for tumbling, tight-rope dancing, and common sports. Nearly a century later a famous revival of Shakespeare's plays was given here.

[2] oratorio.

THE COMEDY OF MANNERS

THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL, BY RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN (1751–1816)

A comedy of manners, as Dickinson has said, "takes the manners of a people or a circle as indexes of its character and civilization." The high comedy of manners deals with the upper classes, idle and sophisticated; with their characters and their views of life. It is often held that the high comedy of manners is impossible in a world of growing democracy; we no longer have an artificial society in which the art of living, like the means of livelihood, is inherited for generations. Today in England members of the nobility are often newspaper men, or brewers, or dairymen; the king is called on to aid in a demonstration of accident prevention in factories, and the Prince of Wales presides at the opening of industrial fairs. However, Wilde and Jones have been able to adapt the comedy of manners very successfully for modern audiences.

In the Benedick-Beatrice plot of Shakespeare's "Much Ado about Nothing" the satire is light and the view of life is an idealized one. In the period of the Restoration, when high comedy reached its fullest development in English, satire is ever present and the view of life is almost never idealized. Only in such a passage as the Mirabell-Millamant scene (IV, i) in Congreve's "The Way of the World" (1700) do we come near the Shakespearian mood of social comedy.

Sheridan wrote more in the spirit of Restoration drama than in that of Shakespeare. It is even curious to see that he quotes Shakespeare inaccurately; no doubt he knew the current stage adaptations better than he did the original plays. But he was

free from the moral license which unfits many Restoration plays for modern presentation, and he had enough of the sentimental feeling of his age (and ours) to endear him to a popular audience. His two best plays, like Shakespeare's and one of Goldsmith's, seem likely to endure with the English stage. Sir Henry Irving called "The School for Scandal" the most popular comedy in the language.

When Sheridan wrote this play he was only twenty-five, a brilliant young man supporting his young family and making a reputation with his pen. The American Revolution was two years old. Only five months after the play was produced in London, Sheridan's fellow dramatist (and possibly his collaborator in a minor production of the next year, called "The Camp"), "Gentleman Johnny" Burgoyne, was surrendering to the American forces at Saratoga. But the English were little concerned about the distant war — least of all a Whig like Sheridan. Two years later, when the fear of Spain and France had become very real in England, Sheridan could ridicule the war panic in the opening scene of "The Critic."

Sheridan was, almost as completely as Goldsmith, the Irishman of story and legend. He was born in Dublin, the son of a theater manager and actor who later became known in England as a teacher of elocution. He attended Harrow and Oxford, and was living in the fashionable resort Bath until his romantic marriage led him to move to London at the age of twenty-one. During his long connection with the theater he was manager of Drury Lane for a generation; but he wrote no original play after 1779, so that he remains a precocious figure in dramatic history — the best dramatist in England at twenty-six and silent at twenty-nine.

In later years Sheridan devoted himself to society and politics, supporting the Whig party and the personal factions of the Prince of Wales and Charles James Fox. From 1780 to 1812 he was a prominent member of Parliament, famous as an orator and wit; but his neglect of sobriety and of economy, his lack of

punctuality in keeping appointments, and his chivalrous habit of taking sides with the "under dog" kept him out of the highest offices and gave him his traditional nickname, "Poor Sherry." He died deeply in debt and in temporary obscurity, but was buried in Westminster Abbey and again acclaimed as a national figure.

His orations, magnificent in their own time, seem too rhetorical today. Most of them are lost through inadequate reporting, and the charm of his personal appearance and utterance is missed by a modern reader. But his best comedies, "The School for Scandal" (1777) and "The Rivals" (1775), sparkle with the wit for which he was famous; they are wonderfully adapted both to the stage and to the study. No man has ever known better than Sheridan how to write for the stage, and few good acting plays suffer less from appearing in print. Sheridan refused to print "The School for Scandal" in an authoritative form; he changed the text from time to time, and continued to make copies for his friends. The present text is that of the Moore edition of 1821, which has been in general use for over a century. A recent critical edition of importance is that of R. Crompton Rhodes (1928).

There are four distinct themes in "The School for Scandal." Several years earlier Sheridan had sketched the scandal group and the situation of the orphaned Maria. To these two preliminary sketches he added the domestic troubles of the Teazles, to furnish wit and incidents, and the returning uncle of Joseph and Charles, to furnish plot. The scandal scenes frame in the play at the beginning and the end, but they do not furnish the main characters or the plot. Maria remains in the background as a prize for the rival brothers. The principal plot is that which culminates in the choice Sir Oliver makes between the two brothers during the auction scene; and the subplot of the Teazles is interwoven with this in the screen scene to make a second and greater climax, which involves all the principal characters of the play. The device of concealing characters on the

stage, so as to increase the significance of every word that is said by the speakers, has become a conventional one on the stage; but Sheridan manages its complexities with extraordinary ease. The subtleties of Joseph only increase his difficulties; he is like a serpent whose windings lay him open to additional injuries from a single direct blow. In her vexation Lady Sneerwell calls him "a blunderer"; but she withdraws this to say that he is too clever: "I have no diffidence of your abilities, only be constant to one roguery at a time."

The constant striving for wit blurs the distinctions between the speakers, especially in the scandal scenes. It has been pointed out that the characters who appear most in the scandal scenes tend to be alike in their witty speech, whereas those who remain away retain their individuality better. Lady Teazle in the epilogue is quite a different person from the Lady Teazle of the last scene of the play; but epilogues were meant to be entertaining speeches to the audience, not correct portrayals of the characters who spoke them.

The play has almost as high spirits as "She Stoops to Conquer," although here we are in a world of satire rather than of fun, of wit rather than of humor, of social types rather than of individualized characters. Maria is a real individual, but most of the characters in the play (and nearly all who are referred to but do not appear) are described by their names. The name of Joseph Surface has a double force; when he denies that he is as virtuous as he seems to be, he says that he is not "an absolute Joseph" (referring to Genesis xxxix, 7–12, where Joseph resisted Potiphar's wife).

Like Goldsmith, Sheridan is careful to let the audience into the secrets beforehand. For example, the villainy of Joseph and the motives of Lady Sneerwell are exposed in the first act, and the double-dealing of Snake is implied. Most of the characters understand each other from the first; the real uncertainties are how Sir Peter Teazle will discover the character of Joseph and what choice Sir Oliver will make between his nephews.

The School for Scandal

The title "School," originally from Molière, was a favorite one in English plays of the eighteenth century. In the latter half of the century there were similar dramatic "Schools" for Arrogance, Fathers, Greybeards, Guardians, Honor, Indifference, Ingratitude, Lovers, Rakes, Soldiers, Widows, and Wives.

In its presentation of Joseph Surface the play is an attack on sentimental comedy. He is called a man of sentiment; he speaks sentimental maxims when he is not off his guard, and his sentiments are made odious when he utters them after his exposure. Sir Peter says scornfully after Joseph's last exit, "Moral to the last." In many other respects, however, the play is itself a sentimental one. Charles is the old favorite of theatergoers, the warm-hearted young man who is "his own worst enemy." Lady Teazle is reconciled to her husband, Maria remains loyal to Charles, and Sir Oliver is moved by the affection of his nephew—all quite in the sentimental fashion. However, the coolness of Charles to Maria is surprisingly evident. It is said that Sheridan doubted the ability of the actor to appear as a lover. If that is true, it explains why Charles has so little to say to Maria, and perhaps why her part in the play is comparatively so unimportant.

Sheridan wrote few plays after this, although he was long connected with the stage as manager of the Drury Lane Theatre. Many explanations have been given, but one of the best is that of Michael Kelly, who said Sheridan could not equal himself afterwards:

"You will never write again. You are afraid to write. . . . You are afraid of the author of 'The School for Scandal.'"

THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Sir Peter Teazle	Rowley
Sir Oliver Surface	Moses
Sir Harry Bumper	Trip
Sir Benjamin Backbite	
Joseph Surface	Lady Teazle
Charles Surface	Lady Sneerwell
Careless	Mrs. Candour
Snake	Maria
Crabtree	

Gentlemen, Maid, and Servants

Scene: *London*

PROLOGUE

Written by Mr. Garrick[1]

A School for Scandal! tell me, I beseech you,
Needs there a school this modish art to teach you?
No need of lessons now, the knowing think;
We might as well be taught to eat and drink.
Caused by a dearth of scandal, should the vapors[2]
Distress our fair ones — let them read the papers:
Their powerful mixtures such disorders hit;
Crave what you will — there's *quantum sufficit.*[3]
"Lord!" cries my Lady Wormwood (who loves tattle,
And puts much salt and pepper in her prattle),

[1] David Garrick, the great actor, who also wrote the prologue for Goldsmith's "She Stoops to Conquer."

[2] blues. [3] a sufficient quantity (*in medical prescriptions*).

Just risen at noon, all night at cards when threshing
Strong tea and scandal — "Bless me, how refreshing!
Give me the papers, Lisp — how bold and free! [*Sips.*]
Last night Lord L. [*Sips.*] *was caught with Lady D.*
For aching heads what charming sal volatile! [*Sips.*]
If Mrs. B. will still continue flirting,
We hope she'll DRAW, *or we'll* UNDRAW *the curtain.*
Fine satire, poz[1] — in public all abuse it,
But, by ourselves, [*Sips.*] our praise we can't refuse it:
Now, Lisp, read you — there, at that dash and star."
"Yes, ma'am — *A certain lord had best beware,*
Who lives not twenty miles from Grosvenor Square[2];
For, should he Lady W. find willing,
Wormwood is bitter" — "Oh! that's me! the villain!
Throw it behind the fire,[3] and never more
Let that vile paper come within my door."
Thus at our friends we laugh, who feel the dart;
To reach our feelings, we ourselves must smart.
Is our young bard so young, to think that he
Can stop the full springtide of calumny?
Knows he the world so little, and its trade?
Alas! the devil 's sooner raised than laid.
So strong, so swift, the monster there's no gagging:
Cut Scandal's head off, still the tongue is wagging.
Proud of your smiles once lavishly bestowed,
Again our young Don Quixote takes the road;
To show his gratitude he draws his pen,
And seeks this hydra, Scandal, in his den.
For your applause all perils he would through —
He'll fight — that's write — a cavalliero true,
Till every drop of blood — that's ink — is spilt for you.

[1] positively (*fashionable slang*).
[2] Fashionable residence section in London.
[3] in the fireplace.

The School for Scandal

ACT I

Scene I. *Lady Sneerwell's house*

[*Discovered* Lady Sneerwell *at the dressing-table;* Snake *drinking chocolate.*]

Lady Sneerwell. The paragraphs, you say, Mr. Snake, were all inserted?

Snake. They were, madam; and, as I copied them myself in a feigned hand, there can be no suspicion whence they came.

Lady Sneerwell. Did you circulate the report of Lady Brittle's intrigue with Captain Boastall?

Snake. That's in as fine a train as your ladyship could wish. In the common course of things, I think it must reach Mrs. Clackitt's ears within four-and-twenty hours; and then, you know, the business is as good as done.

Lady Sneerwell. Why, truly, Mrs. Clackitt has a very pretty talent, and a great deal of industry.

Snake. True, madam, and has been tolerably successful in her day. To my knowledge, she has been the cause of six matches being broken off, and three sons disinherited; of four forced elopements, and as many close confinements; nine separate maintenances, and two divorces. Nay, I have more than once traced her causing a *tête-à-tête* in the *Town and Country Magazine*,[1] when the parties, perhaps, had never seen each other's face before in the course of their lives.

Lady Sneerwell. She certainly has talents, but her manner is gross.

Snake. 'Tis very true. She generally designs well, has a free tongue and a bold invention; but her coloring is too dark, and her outlines often extravagant. She wants that delicacy of tint and mellowness of sneer which distinguish your ladyship's scandal.

[1] Goldsmith ridicules this as the *Scandalous Magazine* in "She Stoops to Conquer," p. 228.

LADY SNEERWELL. You are partial, Snake.

SNAKE. Not in the least; everybody allows that Lady Sneerwell can do more with a word or a look than many can with the most labored detail, even when they happen to have a little truth on their side to support it.

LADY SNEERWELL. Yes, my dear Snake; and I am no hypocrite to deny the satisfaction I reap from the success of my efforts. Wounded myself, in the early part of my life, by the envenomed tongue of slander, I confess I have since known no pleasure equal to the reducing others to the level of my own injured reputation.

SNAKE. Nothing can be more natural. But, Lady Sneerwell, there is one affair in which you have lately employed me, wherein, I confess, I am at a loss to guess your motives.

LADY SNEERWELL. I conceive you mean with respect to my neighbor, Sir Peter Teazle, and his family?

SNAKE. I do. Here are two young men, to whom Sir Peter has acted as a kind of guardian since their father's death — the eldest possessing the most amiable character, and universally well spoken of; the youngest, the most dissipated and extravagant young fellow in the kingdom, without friends or character: the former an avowed admirer of your ladyship's, and apparently your favorite; the latter attached to Maria, Sir Peter's ward, and confessedly beloved by her. Now, on the face of these circumstances, it is utterly unaccountable to me, why you, the widow of a city knight,[1] with a good jointure, should not close with[2] the passion of a man of such character and expectations as Mr. Surface; and more so why you should be so uncommonly earnest to destroy the mutual attachment subsisting between his brother Charles and Maria.

LADY SNEERWELL. Then, at once to unravel this mystery, I must inform you that love has no share whatever in the intercourse between Mr. Surface and me.

[1] A knight from the prosperous merchant class, not of an old impoverished family. [2] make terms with.

SNAKE. No!

LADY SNEERWELL. His real attachment is to Maria, or her fortune; but, finding in his brother a favored rival, he has been obliged to mask his pretensions, and profit by my assistance.

SNAKE. Yet still I am more puzzled why you should interest yourself in his success.

LADY SNEERWELL. How dull you are! Cannot you surmise the weakness which I hitherto, through shame, have concealed even from you? Must I confess that Charles — that libertine, that extravagant, that bankrupt in fortune and reputation — that he it is for whom I am thus anxious and malicious, and to gain whom I would sacrifice everything?

SNAKE. Now, indeed, your conduct appears consistent: but how came you and Mr. Surface so confidential?

LADY SNEERWELL. For our mutual interest. I have found him out a long time since. I know him to be artful, selfish, and malicious — in short, a sentimental knave — while with Sir Peter, and indeed with all his acquaintance, he passes for a youthful miracle of prudence, good sense, and benevolence.

SNAKE. Yes; yet Sir Peter vows he has not his equal in England, and, above all, he praises him as a man of sentiment.

LADY SNEERWELL. True; and with the assistance of his sentiment and hypocrisy he has brought Sir Peter entirely into his interest with regard to Maria; while poor Charles has no friend in the house — though, I fear, he has a powerful one in Maria's heart, against whom we must direct our schemes.

[*Enter* Servant.]

SERVANT. Mr. Surface.

LADY SNEERWELL. Show him up.

[*Exit* Servant.]

[*Enter* JOSEPH SURFACE.]

JOSEPH SURFACE. My dear Lady Sneerwell, how do you do to-day? Mr. Snake, your most obedient.

LADY SNEERWELL. Snake has just been rallying me on our mutual attachment, but I have informed him of our real views. You know how useful he has been to us; and, believe me, the confidence is not ill-placed.

JOSEPH SURFACE. Madam, it is impossible for me to suspect a man of Mr. Snake's sensibility and discernment.

LADY SNEERWELL. Well, well, no compliments now; but tell me when you saw your mistress, Maria — or, what is more material to me, your brother.

JOSEPH SURFACE. I have not seen either since I left you, but I can inform you that they never meet. Some of your stories have taken a good effect on Maria.

LADY SNEERWELL. Ah, my dear Snake! the merit of this belongs to you. But do your brother's distresses increase?

JOSEPH SURFACE. Every hour. I am told he has had another execution[1] in the house yesterday. In short, his dissipation and extravagance exceed anything I have ever heard of.

LADY SNEERWELL. Poor Charles!

JOSEPH SURFACE. True, madam; notwithstanding his vices, one can't help feeling for him. Poor Charles! I'm sure I wish it were in my power to be of any essential service to him; for the man who does not share in the distresses of a brother, even though merited by his own misconduct, deserves —

LADY SNEERWELL. O lud! you are going to be moral, and forget that you are among friends.

JOSEPH SURFACE. Egad,[2] that's true! I'll keep that sentiment till I see Sir Peter. However, it certainly is a charity to rescue Maria from such a libertine, who, if he is to be reclaimed, can be so only by a person of your ladyship's superior accomplishments and understanding.

SNAKE. I believe, Lady Sneerwell, here's company coming: I'll go and copy the letter I mentioned to you. Mr. Surface, your most obedient.

[1] Seizure of his goods in default of payment, or a sheriff's sale.
[2] An oath.

JOSEPH SURFACE. Sir, your very devoted. —

[*Exit* SNAKE.]

Lady Sneerwell, I am very sorry you have put any further confidence in that fellow.

LADY SNEERWELL. Why so?

JOSEPH SURFACE. I have lately detected him in frequent conference with old Rowley, who was formerly my father's steward, and has never, you know, been a friend of mine.

LADY SNEERWELL. And do you think he would betray us?

JOSEPH SURFACE. Nothing more likely: take my word for't, Lady Sneerwell, that fellow hasn't virtue enough to be faithful even to his own villainy. Ah, Maria!

[*Enter* MARIA.]

LADY SNEERWELL. Maria, my dear, how do you do? What's the matter?

MARIA. Oh! there's that disagreeable lover of mine, Sir Benjamin Backbite, has just called at my guardian's, with his odious uncle, Crabtree; so I slipped out, and ran hither to avoid them.

LADY SNEERWELL. Is that all?

JOSEPH SURFACE. If my brother Charles had been of the party, madam, perhaps you would not have been so much alarmed.

LADY SNEERWELL. Nay, now you are severe; for I dare swear the truth of the matter is, Maria heard *you* were here. But, my dear, what has Sir Benjamin done, that you should avoid him so?

MARIA. Oh, he has done nothing — but 'tis for what he has said: his conversation is a perpetual libel on all his acquaintance.

JOSEPH SURFACE. Aye, and the worst of it is, there is no advantage in not knowing him; for he'll abuse a stranger just as soon as his best friend: and his uncle's as bad.

LADY SNEERWELL. Nay, but we should make allowance; Sir Benjamin is a wit and a poet.

MARIA. For my part, I confess, madam, wit loses its respect with me, when I see it in company with malice. What do you think, Mr. Surface?

JOSEPH SURFACE. Certainly, madam; to smile at the jest which plants a thorn in another's breast is to become a principal in the mischief.

LADY SNEERWELL. Pshaw! there's no possibility of being witty without a little ill nature: the malice of a good thing is the barb that makes it stick. What's your opinion, Mr. Surface?

JOSEPH SURFACE. To be sure, madam; that conversation where the spirit of raillery is suppressed will ever appear tedious and insipid.

MARIA. Well, I'll not debate how far scandal may be allowable; but in a man, I am sure, it is always contemptible. We have pride, envy, rivalship, and a thousand motives to depreciate each other; but the male slanderer must have the cowardice of a woman before he can traduce one.

[*Enter* Servant.]

SERVANT. Madam, Mrs. Candour is below, and, if your ladyship's at leisure, will leave her carriage.

LADY SNEERWELL. Beg her to walk in.—

[*Exit* Servant.]

Now, Maria, here is a character to your taste; for, though Mrs. Candour is a little talkative, everybody allows her to be the best-natured and best sort of woman.

MARIA. Yes, with a very gross affectation of good nature and benevolence, she does more mischief than the direct malice of old Crabtree.

JOSEPH SURFACE. I'faith that's true, Lady Sneerwell; whenever I hear the current running against the characters of my friends, I never think them in such danger as when Candour undertakes their defense.

LADY SNEERWELL. Hush!—here she is!

[*Enter* MRS. CANDOUR.]

MRS. CANDOUR. My dear Lady Sneerwell, how have you been this century? — Mr. Surface, what news do you hear? — though indeed it is no matter, for I think one hears nothing else but scandal.

JOSEPH SURFACE. Just so, indeed, ma'am.

MRS. CANDOUR. Oh, Maria! child, — what, is the whole affair off between you and Charles? His extravagance, I presume — the town talks of nothing else.

MARIA. I am very sorry, ma'am, the town has so little to do.

MRS. CANDOUR. True, true, child, but there's no stopping people's tongues. I own I was hurt to hear it, as I indeed was to learn, from the same quarter, that your guardian, Sir Peter, and Lady Teazle have not agreed lately as well as could be wished.

MARIA. 'Tis strangely impertinent for people to busy themselves so.

MRS. CANDOUR. Very true, child, but what's to be done? People will talk — there's no preventing it. Why, it was but yesterday I was told that Miss Gadabout had eloped with Sir Filigree Flirt. But, Lord! there's no minding what one hears; though, to be sure, I had this from very good authority.

MARIA. Such reports are highly scandalous.

MRS. CANDOUR. So they are, child — shameful, shameful! But the world is so censorious, no character escapes. Lord, now who would have suspected your friend, Miss Prim, of an indiscretion? Yet such is the ill nature of people that they say her uncle stopped her last week, just as she was stepping into the York diligence[1] with her dancing-master.

MARIA. I'll answer for't there are no grounds for that report.

MRS. CANDOUR. Ah, no foundation in the world, I dare swear; no more, probably, than for the story circulated last month, of Mrs. Festino's affair with Colonel Cassino — though, to be sure, that matter was never rightly cleared up.

[1] stagecoach.

JOSEPH SURFACE. The license of invention some people take is monstrous indeed.

MARIA. 'Tis so; but, in my opinion, those who report such things are equally culpable.

MRS. CANDOUR. To be sure they are; tale-bearers are as bad as the tale-makers — 'tis an old observation, and a very true one; but what's to be done, as I said before? How will you prevent people from talking? To-day, Mrs. Clackitt assured me, Mr. and Mrs. Honeymoon were at last become mere man and wife, like the rest of their acquaintance. She likewise hinted that a certain widow, in the next street, had got rid of her dropsy and recovered her shape in a most surprising manner. And at the same time, Miss Tattle, who was by, affirmed that Lord Buffalo had discovered his lady at a house of no extraordinary fame; and that Sir H. Bouquet and Tom Saunter were to measure swords on a similar provocation. But, Lord, do you think I would report these things? No, no! tale-bearers, as I said before, are just as bad as the tale-makers.

JOSEPH SURFACE. Ah! Mrs. Candour, if everybody had your forbearance and good nature!

MRS. CANDOUR. I confess, Mr. Surface, I cannot bear to hear people attacked behind their backs; and when ugly circumstances come out against our acquaintance, I own I always love to think the best. By the bye, I hope 'tis not true that your brother is absolutely ruined?

JOSEPH SURFACE. I am afraid his circumstances are very bad indeed, ma'am.

MRS. CANDOUR. Ah! I heard so — but you must tell him to keep up his spirits; everybody almost is in the same way: Lord Spindle, Sir Thomas Splint, Captain Quinze, and Mr. Nickit — all up, I hear, within this week; so, if Charles is undone, he'll find half his acquaintance ruined too, and that, you know, is a consolation.

JOSEPH SURFACE. Doubtless, ma'am — a very great one.

[*Enter* Servant.]

SERVANT. Mr. Crabtree and Sir Benjamin Backbite.

[*Exit* Servant.]

LADY SNEERWELL. So, Maria, you see your lover pursues you; positively you shan't escape.

[*Enter* CRABTREE *and* SIR BENJAMIN BACKBITE.]

CRABTREE. Lady Sneerwell, I kiss your hand. Mrs. Candour, I don't believe you are acquainted with my nephew, Sir Benjamin Backbite? Egad, ma'am, he has a pretty wit, and is a pretty poet too. Isn't he, Lady Sneerwell?

SIR BENJAMIN. Oh, fie, uncle!

CRABTREE. Nay, egad, it's true; I back him at a rebus or a charade against the best rimer in the kingdom. Has your ladyship heard the epigram he wrote last week on Lady Frizzle's feather catching fire?[1] — Do, Benjamin, repeat it, or the charade you made last night extempore at Mrs. Drowzie's conversazione.[2] Come now; your first is the name of a fish, your second a great naval commander, and —

SIR BENJAMIN. Uncle, now — prithee —

CRABTREE. I'faith, ma'am, 'twould surprise you to hear how ready he is at all these fine sort of things.

LADY SNEERWELL. I wonder, Sir Benjamin, you never publish anything.

SIR BENJAMIN. To say truth, ma'am, 'tis very vulgar to print; and as my little productions are mostly satires and lampoons on particular people, I find they circulate more by giving copies in confidence to the friends of the parties. However, I have some love elegies, which, when favored with this lady's smiles, I mean to give the public. [*Pointing to* MARIA]

[1] In the chandelier above; some of the plumed headdresses were tall enough for this.

[2] A fashionable reception for conversation on literature and art.

CRABTREE. [*To* MARIA] 'Fore heaven, ma'am, they'll immortalize you! — you will be handed down to posterity, like Petrarch's Laura,[1] or Waller's Sacharissa.[2]

SIR BENJAMIN. [*To* MARIA] Yes, madam, I think you will like them, when you shall see them on a beautiful quarto page, where a neat rivulet of text shall meander through a meadow of margin. 'Fore Gad they will be the most elegant things of their kind!

CRABTREE. But, ladies, that's true — have you heard the news?

MRS. CANDOUR. What, sir, do you mean the report of —

CRABTREE. No, ma'am, that's not it. — Miss Nicely is going to be married to her own footman.

MRS. CANDOUR. Impossible!

CRABTREE. Ask Sir Benjamin.

SIR BENJAMIN. 'Tis very true, ma'am; everything is fixed, and the wedding liveries bespoke.

CRABTREE. Yes — and they do say there were pressing reasons for it.

LADY SNEERWELL. Why, I have heard something of this before.

MRS. CANDOUR. It can't be — and I wonder anyone should believe such a story of so prudent a lady as Miss Nicely.

SIR BENJAMIN. O lud! ma'am, that's the very reason 'twas believed at once. She has always been so cautious and so reserved that everybody was sure there was some reason for it at bottom.

MRS. CANDOUR. Why, to be sure, a tale of scandal is as fatal to the credit of a prudent lady of her stamp as a fever is generally to those of the strongest constitutions. But there is a sort of puny sickly reputation, that is always ailing, yet will outlive the robuster characters of a hundred prudes.

SIR BENJAMIN. True, madam, there are valetudinarians[3] in

[1] Petrarch (1304–1374), an Italian poet whose sonnets were addressed to Laura.

[2] Waller (1606–1687), an English poet who addressed love lyrics to Sacharissa (Lady Dorothy Sidney).

[3] invalids.

reputation as well as constitution, who, being conscious of their weak part, avoid the least breath of air and supply their want of stamina by care and circumspection.

Mrs. Candour. Well, but this may be all a mistake. You know, Sir Benjamin, very trifling circumstances often give rise to the most injurious tales.

Crabtree. That they do, I'll be sworn, ma'am. — Did you ever hear how Miss Piper came to lose her lover and her character last summer at Tunbridge?[1] — Sir Benjamin, you remember it?

Sir Benjamin. Oh, to be sure! — the most whimsical circumstance.

Lady Sneerwell. How was it, pray?

Crabtree. Why, one evening, at Mrs. Ponto's assembly, the conversation happened to turn on the breeding Nova Scotia sheep in this country. Says a young lady in company, " I have known instances of it — for Miss Letitia Piper, a first cousin of mine, had a Nova Scotia sheep that produced her twins." — " What! " cries the Lady Dowager Dundizzy (who you know is as deaf as a post), " has Miss Piper had twins? " — This mistake, as you may imagine, threw the whole company into a fit of laughter. However, 'twas the next morning everywhere reported, and in a few days believed by the whole town, that Miss Letitia Piper had actually been brought to bed of a fine boy and a girl; and in less than a week there were some people who could name the father, and the farmhouse where the babies were put to nurse.

Lady Sneerwell. Strange, indeed!

Crabtree. Matter of fact, I assure you. — O lud! Mr. Surface, pray is it true that your uncle, Sir Oliver, is coming home?

Joseph Surface. Not that I know of, indeed, sir.

Crabtree. He has been in the East Indies[2] a long time. You can scarcely remember him, I believe? Sad comfort, whenever he returns, to hear how your brother has gone on!

[1] Tunbridge Wells, a watering place south of London.

[2] India.

JOSEPH SURFACE. Charles has been imprudent, sir, to be sure; but I hope no busy people have already prejudiced Sir Oliver against him. He may reform.

SIR BENJAMIN. To be sure he may: for my part, I never believed him to be so utterly void of principle as people say; and, though he has lost all his friends, I am told nobody is better spoken of by the Jews.

CRABTREE. That's true, egad, nephew. If the Old Jewry[1] was a ward, I believe Charles would be an alderman; no man more popular there, 'fore Gad! I hear he pays as many annuities as the Irish tontine[2]; and that, whenever he is sick, they have prayers for the recovery of his health in all the synagogues.

SIR BENJAMIN. Yet no man lives in greater splendor. They tell me, when he entertains his friends he will sit down to dinner with a dozen of his own securities; have a score of tradesmen waiting in the antechamber, and an officer behind every guest's chair.

JOSEPH SURFACE. This may be entertainment to you, gentlemen, but you pay very little regard to the feelings of a brother.

MARIA. [*Aside*] Their malice is intolerable!— [*Aloud*] Lady Sneerwell, I must wish you a good morning; I'm not very well.

[*Exit* MARIA.]

MRS. CANDOUR. O dear! she changes color very much.

LADY SNEERWELL. Do, Mrs. Candour, follow her; she may want assistance.

MRS. CANDOUR. That I will, with all my soul, ma'am.— Poor dear girl, who knows what her situation may be!

[*Exit* MRS. CANDOUR.]

LADY SNEERWELL. 'Twas nothing but that she could not bear to hear Charles reflected on, notwithstanding their difference.

SIR BENJAMIN. The young lady's *penchant*[3] is obvious.

CRABTREE. But, Benjamin, you must not give up the pur-

[1] A London street frequented by Jews in the Middle Ages.
[2] An insurance scheme by which the government wished to raise money.
[3] strong inclination.

suit for that; follow her, and put her into good humor. Repeat her some of your own verses. Come, I'll assist you.

SIR BENJAMIN. Mr. Surface, I did not mean to hurt you; but depend on't your brother is utterly undone.

CRABTREE. O lud, aye! undone as ever man was — can't raise a guinea!

SIR BENJAMIN. And everything sold, I'm told, that was movable.

CRABTREE. I have seen one that was at his house. Not a thing left but some empty bottles that were overlooked, and the family pictures, which I believe are framed in the wainscots.

SIR BENJAMIN. And I'm very sorry also to hear some bad stories against him. [*Going*]

CRABTREE. Oh, he has done many mean things, that 's certain.

SIR BENJAMIN. But, however, as he's your brother — [*Going*]

CRABTREE. We'll tell you all another opportunity.

[*Exeunt* CRABTREE *and* SIR BENJAMIN.]

LADY SNEERWELL. Ha! ha! 'tis very hard for them to leave a subject they have not quite run down.

JOSEPH SURFACE. And I believe the abuse was no more acceptable to your ladyship than Maria.

LADY SNEERWELL. I doubt[1] her affections are farther engaged than we imagine. But the family are to be here this evening, so you may as well dine where you are, and we shall have an opportunity of observing farther; in the meantime, I'll go and plot mischief, and you shall study sentiment.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. SIR PETER'S *house*

[*Enter* SIR PETER.]

SIR PETER. When an old bachelor marries a young wife, what is he to expect? 'Tis now six months since Lady Teazle made me the happiest of men — and I have been the most miserable

[1] suspect, fear.

dog ever since! We tiffed a little going to church, and fairly quarreled before the bells had done ringing. I was more than once nearly choked with gall during the honeymoon, and had lost all comfort in life before my friends had done wishing me joy. Yet I chose with caution — a girl bred wholly in the country, who never knew luxury beyond one silk gown, nor dissipation above the annual gala of a race ball. Yet now she plays her part in all the extravagant fopperies of the fashion and the town, with as ready a grace as if she had never seen a bush or a grassplot out of Grosvenor Square! I am sneered at by all my acquaintance, and paragraphed in the newspapers. She dissipates my fortune, and contradicts all my humors; yet the worst of it is, I doubt I love her, or I should never bear all this. However, I'll never be weak enough to own it.

[*Enter* Rowley.]

Rowley. Oh! Sir Peter, your servant; how is it with you, sir?

Sir Peter. Very bad, Master Rowley, very bad. I meet with nothing but crosses and vexations.

Rowley. What can have happened to trouble you since yesterday?

Sir Peter. A good question to a married man!

Rowley. Nay, I'm sure your lady, Sir Peter, can't be the cause of your uneasiness.

Sir Peter. Why, has anybody told you she was dead?

Rowley. Come, come, Sir Peter, you love her, notwithstanding your tempers don't exactly agree.

Sir Peter. But the fault is entirely hers, Master Rowley. I am, myself, the sweetest-tempered man alive, and hate a teasing temper; and so I tell her a hundred times a day.

Rowley. Indeed!

Sir Peter. Aye; and what is very extraordinary, in all our disputes she is always in the wrong! But Lady Sneerwell, and the set she meets at her house, encourage the perverseness of her disposition. Then, to complete my vexation, Maria, my ward,

whom I ought to have the power over, is determined to turn rebel too, and absolutely refuses the man whom I have long resolved on for her husband; meaning, I suppose, to bestow herself on his profligate brother.

ROWLEY. You know, Sir Peter, I have always taken the liberty to differ with you on the subject of these two young gentlemen. I only wish you may not be deceived in your opinion of the elder. For Charles, my life on't! he will retrieve his errors yet. Their worthy father, once my honored master, was, at his years, nearly as wild a spark; yet, when he died, he did not leave a more benevolent heart to lament his loss.

SIR PETER. You are wrong, Master Rowley. On their father's death, you know, I acted as a kind of guardian to them both, till their uncle Sir Oliver's liberality gave them an early independence; of course, no person could have more opportunities of judging of their hearts, and I was never mistaken in my life. Joseph is indeed a model for the young men of the age. He is a man of sentiment, and acts up to the sentiments he professes; but, for the other, take my word for't, if he had any grain of virtue by descent, he has dissipated it with the rest of his inheritance. Ah! my old friend, Sir Oliver, will be deeply mortified when he finds how part of his bounty has been misapplied.

ROWLEY. I am sorry to find you so violent against the young man, because this may be the most critical period of his fortune. I came hither with news that will surprise you.

SIR PETER. What! let me hear.

ROWLEY. Sir Oliver is arrived, and at this moment in town.

SIR PETER. How! you astonish me! I thought you did not expect him this month.

ROWLEY. I did not, but his passage has been remarkably quick.

SIR PETER. Egad, I shall rejoice to see my old friend. 'Tis fifteen years since we met. We have had many a day together — but does he still enjoin us not to inform his nephews of his arrival?

ROWLEY. Most strictly. He means, before it is known, to make some trial of their dispositions.

SIR PETER. Ah! there needs no art to discover their merits — he shall have his way; but, pray, does he know I am married?

ROWLEY. Yes, and will soon wish you joy.

SIR PETER. What, as we drink health to a friend in a consumption! Ah! Oliver will laugh at me. We used to rail at matrimony together, and he has been steady to his text. Well, he must be soon at my house, though — I'll instantly give orders for his reception. But, Master Rowley, don't drop a word that Lady Teazle and I ever disagree.

ROWLEY. By no means.

SIR PETER. For I should never be able to stand Noll's jokes; so I'll have him think, Lord forgive me! that we are a very happy couple.

ROWLEY. I understand you — but then you must be very careful not to differ while he is in the house with you.

SIR PETER. Egad, and so we must — and that's impossible. Ah! Master Rowley, when an old bachelor marries a young wife, he deserves — no — the crime carries its punishment along with it. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT II

SCENE I. SIR PETER'S *house*

[*Enter* SIR PETER *and* LADY TEAZLE.]

SIR PETER. Lady Teazle, Lady Teazle, I'll not bear it!

LADY TEAZLE. Sir Peter, Sir Peter, you may bear it or not, as you please; but I ought to have my own way in everything, and, what's more, I will too. What! though I was educated in the country, I know very well that women of fashion in London are accountable to nobody after they are married.

SIR PETER. Very well, ma'am, very well; so a husband is to have no influence, no authority?

LADY TEAZLE. Authority! No, to be sure. If you wanted authority over me, you should have adopted me, and not married me: I am sure you were old enough.

SIR PETER. Old enough! — aye, there it is. Well, well, Lady Teazle, though my life may be made unhappy by your temper, I'll not be ruined by your extravagance!

LADY TEAZLE. My extravagance! I'm sure I'm not more extravagant than a woman of fashion ought to be.

SIR PETER. No, no, madam, you shall throw away no more sums on such unmeaning luxury. 'Slife![1] to spend as much to furnish your dressing-room with flowers in winter as would suffice to turn the Pantheon[2] into a greenhouse, and give a *fête champêtre*[3] at Christmas.

LADY TEAZLE. And am I to blame, Sir Peter, because flowers are dear in cold weather? You should find fault with the climate, and not with me. For my part, I'm sure I wish it was spring all the year round, and that roses grew under our feet!

SIR PETER. Oons![4] madam — if you had been born to this, I shouldn't wonder at your talking thus; but you forget what your situation was when I married you.

LADY TEAZLE. No, no, I don't; 'twas a very disagreeable one, or I should never have married you.

SIR PETER. Yes, yes, madam, you were then in somewhat a humbler style — the daughter of a plain country squire. Recollect, Lady Teazle, when I saw you first sitting at your tambour,[5] in a pretty figured linen gown, with a bunch of keys at your side, your hair combed smooth over a roll, and your apartment hung round with fruits in worsted, of your own working.

LADY TEAZLE. Oh, yes! I remember it very well, and a curious life I led. My daily occupation to inspect the dairy, super-

[1] A disguised oath (God's life).
[2] A large hall in Oxford Street, London, for concerts and entertainments.
[3] open-air festival.
[4] A disguised oath (God's wounds).
[5] An embroidery frame.

intend the poultry, make extracts from the family receipt-book, and comb my aunt Deborah's lapdog.

Sir Peter. Yes, yes, ma'am, 'twas so indeed.

Lady Teazle. And then, you know, my evening amusements! To draw patterns for ruffles, which I had not materials to make up; to play Pope Joan[1] with the curate; to read a sermon to my aunt; or to be stuck down to an old spinet to strum my father to sleep after a fox-chase.

Sir Peter. I am glad you have so good a memory. Yes, madam, these were the recreations I took you from; but now you must have your coach — *vis-à-vis*[2] — and three powdered footmen before your chair[3]; and, in the summer, a pair of white cobs to draw you to Kensington Gardens.[4] No recollection, I suppose, when you were content to ride double, behind the butler, on a docked coach horse.

Lady Teazle. No — I swear I never did that. I deny the butler and the coach horse.

Sir Peter. This, madam, was your situation; and what have I done for you? I have made you a woman of fashion, of fortune, of rank — in short, I have made you my wife.

Lady Teazle. Well, then, and there is but one thing more you can make me to add to the obligation; that is —

Sir Peter. My widow, I suppose?

Lady Teazle. Hem! hem!

Sir Peter. I thank you, madam — but don't flatter yourself, for, though your ill conduct may disturb my peace, it shall never break my heart, I promise you; however, I am equally obliged to you for the hint.

Lady Teazle. Then why will you endeavor to make yourself so disagreeable to me, and thwart me in every little elegant expense?

Sir Peter. 'Slife, madam, I say, had you any of these little elegant expenses when you married me?

[1] A card game. [2] A two-seated coach. [3] Sedan chair.
[4] A park in the West End (where Peter Pan lived, in Barrie's play).

Lady Teazle. Lud, Sir Peter! would you have me be out of the fashion?

Sir Peter. The fashion, indeed! what had you to do with the fashion before you married me?

Lady Teazle. For my part, I should think you would like to have your wife thought a woman of taste.

Sir Peter. Aye — there again — taste! Zounds! madam, you had no taste when you married me!

Lady Teazle. That's very true, indeed, Sir Peter! and, after having married you, I should never pretend to taste again, I allow. But now, Sir Peter, if we have finished our daily jangle, I presume I may go to my engagement at Lady Sneerwell's.

Sir Peter. Aye, there's another precious circumstance — a charming set of acquaintance you have made there!

Lady Teazle. Nay, Sir Peter, they are all people of rank and fortune, and remarkably tenacious of reputation.

Sir Peter. Yes, egad, they are tenacious of reputation with a vengeance; for they don't choose anybody should have a character but themselves! Such a crew! Ah! many a wretch has rid on a hurdle[1] who has done less mischief than these utterers of forged tales, coiners of scandal, and clippers of reputation.[2]

Lady Teazle. What, would you restrain the freedom of speech?

Sir Peter. Ah! they have made you just as bad as anyone of the society.

Lady Teazle. Why, I believe I do bear a part with a tolerable grace. But I vow I bear no malice against the people I abuse; when I say an ill-natured thing, 'tis out of pure good humor, and I take it for granted they deal exactly in the same manner with me. But, Sir Peter, you know you promised to come to Lady Sneerwell's too.

[1] A rough sled on which criminals were dragged to execution.

[2] Alluding to those who issued or coined counterfeit money, and to those who clipped the edges of coins (before the use of milled edges prevented such clipping).

Sir Peter. Well, well, I'll call in, just to look after my own character.

Lady Teazle. Then, indeed, you must make haste after me, or you'll be too late. So good-by to ye. [*Exit* Lady Teazle.]

Sir Peter. So — I have gained much by my intended expostulation! Yet with what a charming air she contradicts everything I say, and how pleasingly she shows her contempt for my authority! Well, though I can't make her love me, there is great satisfaction in quarreling with her; and I think she never appears to such advantage as when she is doing everything in her power to plague me. [*Exit.*]

Scene II. *At* Lady Sneerwell's

[*Enter* Lady Sneerwell, Mrs. Candour, Crabtree, Sir Benjamin Backbite, *and* Joseph Surface.]

Lady Sneerwell. Nay, positively, we will hear it.

Joseph Surface. Yes, yes, the epigram, by all means.

Sir Benjamin. O plague on't, uncle! 'tis mere nonsense.

Crabtree. No, no; 'fore Gad, very clever for an extempore!

Sir Benjamin. But, ladies, you should be acquainted with the circumstance. You must know that one day last week, as Lady Betty Curricle was taking the dust in Hyde Park,[1] in a sort of duodecimo[2] phaeton, she desired me to write some verses on her ponies; upon which, I took out my pocketbook, and in one moment produced the following:

> Sure never were seen two such beautiful ponies;
> Other horses are clowns, but these macaronies:
> To give them this title I'm sure can't be wrong,
> Their legs are so slim, and their tails are so long.

Crabtree. There, ladies, done in the smack of a whip, and on horseback too.

[1] driving in Hyde Park (*adjoining Kensington Gardens.*)
[2] miniature (*usually, a small book*).

JOSEPH SURFACE. A very Phœbus,[1] mounted — indeed, Sir Benjamin!

SIR BENJAMIN. O dear, sir! trifles — trifles.

[*Enter* LADY TEAZLE *and* MARIA.]

MRS. CANDOUR. I must have a copy.

LADY SNEERWELL. Lady Teazle, I hope we shall see Sir Peter?

LADY TEAZLE. I believe he'll wait on your ladyship presently.

LADY SNEERWELL. Maria, my love, you look grave. Come, you shall sit down to piquet[2] with Mr. Surface.

MARIA. I take very little pleasure in cards — however, I'll do as you please.

LADY TEAZLE. I am surprised Mr. Surface should sit down with her; [*Aside*] I thought he would have embraced this opportunity of speaking to me before Sir Peter came.

MRS. CANDOUR. Now, I'll die, but you are so scandalous, I'll forswear your society.

LADY TEAZLE. What's the matter, Mrs. Candour?

MRS. CANDOUR. They'll not allow our friend Miss Vermilion to be handsome.

LADY SNEERWELL. Oh, surely she is a pretty woman.

CRABTREE. I am very glad you think so, ma'am.

MRS. CANDOUR. She has a charming fresh color.

LADY TEAZLE. Yes, when it is fresh put on.

MRS. CANDOUR. Oh, fie! I'll swear her color is natural; I have seen it come and go!

LADY TEAZLE. I dare swear you have, ma'am; it goes off at night, and comes again in the morning.

SIR BENJAMIN. True, ma'am, it not only comes and goes, but, what's more, egad, her maid can fetch and carry it!

MRS. CANDOUR. Ha! ha! ha! how I hate to hear you talk so! But surely, now, her sister *is*, or *was*, very handsome.

CRABTREE. Who? Mrs. Evergreen? O Lord! she's six-and-fifty if she's an hour!

[1] Apollo.

[2] A game of cards for two.

Mrs. Candour. Now positively you wrong her; fifty-two or fifty-three is the utmost — and I don't think she looks more.

Sir Benjamin. Ah! there's no judging by her looks, unless one could see her face.

Lady Sneerwell. Well, well, if Mrs. Evergreen *does* take some pains to repair the ravages of time, you must allow she effects it with great ingenuity; and surely that's better than the careless manner in which the widow Ochre calks her wrinkles.

Sir Benjamin. Nay, now, Lady Sneerwell, you are severe upon the widow. Come, come, 'tis not that she paints so ill — but, when she has finished her face, she joins it so badly to her neck that she looks like a mended statue, in which the connoisseur sees at once that the head's modern, though the trunk's antique.

Crabtree. Ha! ha! ha! Well said, nephew!

Mrs. Candour. Ha! ha! ha! Well, you make me laugh; but I vow I hate you for it. What do you think of Miss Simper?

Sir Benjamin. Why, she has very pretty teeth.

Lady Teazle. Yes; and on that account, when she is neither speaking nor laughing (which very seldom happens), she never absolutely shuts her mouth, but leaves it always on a jar, as it were — thus. [*Shows her teeth.*]

Mrs. Candour. How can you be so ill-natured?

Lady Teazle. Nay, I allow even that's better than the pains Mrs. Prim takes to conceal her losses in front. She draws her mouth till it positively resembles the aperture of a poor-box, and all her words appear to slide out edgewise, as it were — thus: "How do you do, madam? Yes, madam."

Lady Sneerwell. Very well, Lady Teazle; I see you can be a little severe.

Lady Teazle. In defense of a friend it is but justice. But here comes Sir Peter to spoil our pleasantry.

[*Enter* Sir Peter Teazle.]

Sir Peter. Ladies, your most obedient. — [*Aside*] Mercy on me, here is the whole set! a character dead at every word, I suppose.

MRS. CANDOUR. I am rejoiced you are come, Sir Peter. They have been so censorious — and Lady Teazle as bad as anyone.

SIR PETER. It must be very distressing to *you*, Mrs. Candour, I dare swear.

MRS. CANDOUR. Oh, they will allow good qualities to nobody; not even good nature to our friend Mrs. Pursy.

LADY TEAZLE. What, the fat dowager who was at Mrs. Quadrille's last night?

MRS. CANDOUR. Nay, her bulk is her misfortune; and, when she takes such pains to get rid of it, you ought not to reflect on her.

LADY SNEERWELL. That's very true, indeed.

LADY TEAZLE. Yes, I know she almost lives on acids and small whey; laces herself by pulleys; and often, in the hottest noon in summer, you may see her on a little squat pony, with her hair plaited up behind like a drummer's and puffing round the Ring[1] on a full trot.

MRS. CANDOUR. I thank you, Lady Teazle, for defending her.

SIR PETER. Yes, a good defense, truly.

MRS. CANDOUR. Truly, Lady Teazle is as censorious as Miss Sallow.

CRABTREE. Yes, and she is a curious being to pretend to be censorious — an awkward gawky, without any one good point under heaven.

MRS. CANDOUR. Positively you shall not be so very severe. Miss Sallow is a near relation of mine by marriage, and, as for her person, great allowance is to be made; for, let me tell you, a woman labors under many disadvantages who tries to pass for a girl at six-and-thirty.

LADY SNEERWELL. Though, surely, she is handsome still — and for the weakness in her eyes, considering how much she reads by candlelight, it is not to be wondered at.

MRS. CANDOUR. True, and then as to her manner; upon my word, I think it is particularly graceful, considering she never

[1] A fashionable riding circle in Hyde Park.

had the least education: for you know her mother was a Welsh milliner, and her father a sugar-baker at Bristol.

SIR BENJAMIN. Ah! you are both of you too good-natured!

SIR PETER. Yes, damned good-natured! [*Aside*] This their own relation! mercy on me!

MRS. CANDOUR. For my part, I own I cannot bear to hear a friend ill spoken of.

SIR PETER. No, to be sure!

SIR BENJAMIN. Oh! you are of a moral turn. Mrs. Candour and I can sit for an hour and hear Lady Stucco talk sentiment.

LADY TEAZLE. Nay, I vow Lady Stucco is very well with the dessert after dinner; for she's just like the French fruit one cracks for mottoes — made up of paint and proverb.

MRS. CANDOUR. Well, I never will join in ridiculing a friend; and so I constantly tell my cousin Ogle, and you all know what pretensions she has to be critical on beauty.

CRABTREE. Oh, to be sure! she has herself the oddest countenance that ever was seen; 'tis a collection of features from all the different countries of the globe.

SIR BENJAMIN. So she has, indeed — an Irish front —

CRABTREE. Caledonian locks —

SIR BENJAMIN. Dutch nose —

CRABTREE. Austrian lips —

SIR BENJAMIN. Complexion of a Spaniard —

CRABTREE. And teeth *à la Chinoise*[1] —

SIR BENJAMIN. In short, her face resembles a *table d'hôte* at Spa[2] — where no two guests are of a nation —

CRABTREE. Or a congress at the close of a general war — wherein all the members, even to her eyes, appear to have a different interest, and her nose and chin are the only parties likely to join issue.

MRS. CANDOUR. Ha! ha! ha!

[1] The Chinese were supposed to black their teeth.

[2] A watering place in Belgium.

SIR PETER. [*Aside*] Mercy on my life ! — a person they dine with twice a week!

LADY SNEERWELL. Go, go; you are a couple of provoking toads.

MRS. CANDOUR. Nay, but I vow you shall not carry the laugh off so — for give me leave to say, that Mrs. Ogle —

SIR PETER. Madam, madam, I beg your pardon — there's no stopping these good gentlemen's tongues. But when I tell you, Mrs. Candour, that the lady they are abusing is a particular friend of mine, I hope you'll not take her part.

LADY SNEERWELL. Ha! ha! ha! well said, Sir Peter! but you are a cruel creature — too phlegmatic yourself for a jest, and too peevish to allow wit in others.

SIR PETER. Ah, madam, true wit is more nearly allied to good nature than your ladyship is aware of.

LADY TEAZLE. True, Sir Peter; I believe they are so near akin that they can never be united.

SIR BENJAMIN. Or, rather, madam, suppose them to be man and wife, because one seldom sees them together.

LADY TEAZLE. But Sir Peter is such an enemy to scandal, I believe he would have it put down by Parliament.

SIR PETER. 'Fore Heaven, madam, if they were to consider the sporting with reputation of as much importance as poaching on manors, and pass an act for the preservation of fame, as well as game, I believe there are many would thank them for the bill.

LADY SNEERWELL. O lud! Sir Peter; would you deprive us of our privileges?

SIR PETER. Aye, madam; and then no person should be permitted to kill characters and run down reputations, but qualified old maids and disappointed widows.

LADY SNEERWELL. Go, you monster!

MRS. CANDOUR. But, surely, you would not be quite so severe on those who only report what they hear?

SIR PETER. Yes, madam, I would have law merchant[1] for them too; and in all cases of slander currency, whenever the

[1] mercantile law.

drawer of the lie was not to be found, the injured parties should have a right to come on any of the indorsers.[1]

CRABTREE. Well, for my part, I believe there never was a scandalous tale without some foundation.

SIR PETER. Oh, nine out of ten of the malicious inventions are founded on some ridiculous misrepresentation!

LADY SNEERWELL. Come, ladies, shall we sit down to cards in the next room?

[*Enter a* Servant, *who whispers* SIR PETER.]

SIR PETER. I'll be with them directly.— [*Aside*] I'll get away unperceived.

[*Exit* Servant.]

LADY SNEERWELL. Sir Peter, you are not going to leave us?

SIR PETER. Your ladyship must excuse me; I'm called away by particular business. But I leave my character behind me.

[*Exit* SIR PETER.]

SIR BENJAMIN. Well — certainly, Lady Teazle, that lord of yours is a strange being. I could tell you some stories of him would make you laugh heartily if he were not your husband.

LADY TEAZLE. Oh, pray don't mind that; come, do let's hear them. [*Joins the rest of the company going into the next room.*]

JOSEPH SURFACE. Maria, I see you have no satisfaction in this society.

MARIA. How is it possible I should? If to raise malicious smiles at the infirmities or misfortunes of those who have never injured us be the province of wit or humor, Heaven grant me a double portion of dullness!

JOSEPH SURFACE. Yet they appear more ill-natured than they are; they have no malice at heart.

MARIA. Then is their conduct still more contemptible; for, in my opinion, nothing could excuse the intemperance of their tongues but a natural and uncontrollable bitterness of mind.

JOSEPH SURFACE. Undoubtedly, madam; and it has always

[1] The indorser of a note is responsible if the original drawer fails to pay.

been a sentiment of mine, that to propagate a malicious truth wantonly is more despicable than to falsify from revenge. But can you, Maria, feel thus for others, and be unkind to me alone? Is hope to be denied the tenderest passion?

MARIA. Why will you distress me by renewing the subject?

JOSEPH SURFACE. Ah, Maria! you would not treat me thus, and oppose your guardian, Sir Peter's will, but that I see that profligate Charles is still a favored rival.

MARIA. Ungenerously urged! But, whatever my sentiments for that unfortunate young man, be assured I shall not feel more bound to give him up because his distresses have lost him the regard even of a brother.

JOSEPH SURFACE. Nay, but, Maria, do not leave me with a frown; by all that's honest, I swear — [*Kneels.*]

[*Enter* LADY TEAZLE, *and comes forward.*]

[*Aside*] Gad's life, here's Lady Teazle. — [*Aloud to* MARIA] You must not — no, you shall not — for, though I have the greatest regard for Lady Teazle —

MARIA. Lady Teazle!

JOSEPH SURFACE. Yet were Sir Peter to suspect —

LADY TEAZLE. What is this, pray? Do you take her for me? — Child, you are wanted in the next room. —

[*Exit* MARIA.]

What is all this, pray?

JOSEPH SURFACE. Oh, the most unlucky circumstance in nature! Maria has somehow suspected the tender concern I have for your happiness, and threatened to acquaint Sir Peter with her suspicions, and I was just endeavoring to reason with her when you came in.

LADY TEAZLE. Indeed! but you seemed to adopt a very tender mode of reasoning — do you usually argue on your knees?

JOSEPH SURFACE. Oh, she's a child, and I thought a little bombast — But, Lady Teazle, when are you to give me your judgment on my library, as you promised?

Lady Teazle. No, no; I begin to think it would be imprudent, and you know I admit you as a lover no farther than fashion sanctions.

Joseph Surface. True — a mere Platonic cicisbeo,[1] what every wife is entitled to.

Lady Teazle. Certainly, one must not be out of the fashion. However, I have so much of my country prejudices left, that, though Sir Peter's ill humor may vex me ever so, it never shall provoke me to —

Joseph Surface. The only revenge in your power. Well, I applaud your moderation.

Lady Teazle. Go — you are an insinuating wretch! But we shall be missed — let us join the company.

Joseph Surface. But we had best not return together.

Lady Teazle. Well, don't stay; for Maria shan't come to hear any more of your reasoning, I promise you. [*Exit.*]

Joseph Surface. A curious dilemma my politics have run me into! I wanted, at first, only to ingratiate myself with Lady Teazle, that she might not be my enemy with Maria; and I have, I don't know how, become her serious lover. Sincerely I begin to wish I had never made such a point of gaining so very good a character, for it has led me into so many cursed rogueries that I doubt I shall be exposed at last. [*Exit.*]

Scene III. Sir Peter Teazle's

[*Enter* Rowley *and* Sir Oliver Surface.]

Sir Oliver. Ha! ha! ha! so my old friend is married, hey? — a young wife out of the country. Ha! ha! ha! that he should have stood bluff to old bachelor so long, and sink into a husband at last!

Rowley. But you must not rally him on the subject, Sir Oliver; 'tis a tender point, I assure you, though he has been married only seven months.

[1] The gallant of a married woman.

SIR OLIVER. Then he has been just half a year on the stool of repentance! — Poor Peter! But you say he has entirely given up Charles — never sees him, hey?

ROWLEY. His prejudice against him is astonishing, and I am sure greatly increased by a jealousy of him with Lady Teazle, which he has industriously been led into by a scandalous society in the neighborhood, who have contributed not a little to Charles's ill name. Whereas the truth is, I believe, if the lady is partial to either of them, his brother is the favorite.

SIR OLIVER. Aye, I know there are a set of malicious, prating, prudent gossips, both male and female, who murder characters to kill time, and will rob a young fellow of his good name before he has years to know the value of it. But I am not to be prejudiced against my nephew by such, I promise you! No, no; if Charles has done nothing false or mean, I shall compound[1] for his extravagance.

ROWLEY. Then, my life on't, you will reclaim him. Ah, sir, it gives me new life to find that *your* heart is not turned against him, and that the son of my good old master has one friend, however, left.

SIR OLIVER. What! shall I forget, Master Rowley, when I was at his years myself? Egad, my brother and I were neither of us very prudent youths; and yet, I believe, you have not seen many better men than your old master was?

ROWLEY. Sir, 'tis this reflection gives me assurance that Charles may yet be a credit to his family. But here comes Sir Peter.

SIR OLIVER. Egad, so he does! Mercy on me! he's greatly altered, and seems to have a settled married look! One may read *husband* in his face at this distance.

[*Enter* SIR PETER TEAZLE.]

SIR PETER. Ha! Sir Oliver — my old friend! Welcome to England a thousand times!

[1] make an adjustment, settle.

Sir Oliver. Thank you, thank you, Sir Peter! and i'faith I am glad to find you well, believe me!

Sir Peter. Oh! 'tis a long time since we met — fifteen years, I doubt, Sir Oliver, and many a cross accident in the time.

Sir Oliver. Aye, I have had my share. But, what! I find you are married, hey? Well, well, it can't be helped; and so — I wish you joy with all my heart!

Sir Peter. Thank you, thank you, Sir Oliver. — Yes, I have entered into — the happy state; but we'll not talk of that now.

Sir Oliver. True, true, Sir Peter; old friends should not begin on grievances at first meeting. No, no, no.

Rowley. [*Aside to* Sir Oliver] Take care, pray, sir.

Sir Oliver. Well, so one of my nephews is a wild fellow, hey?

Sir Peter. Wild! Ah! my old friend, I grieve for your disappointment there; he's a lost young man, indeed. However, his brother will make you amends; Joseph is, indeed, what a youth should be — everybody in the world speaks well of him.

Sir Oliver. I am sorry to hear it; he has too good a character to be an honest fellow. Everybody speaks well of him! Pshaw! then he has bowed as low to knaves and fools as to the honest dignity of genius and virtue.

Sir Peter. What, Sir Oliver! do you blame him for not making enemies?

Sir Oliver. Yes, if he has merit enough to deserve them.

Sir Peter. Well, well — you'll be convinced when you know him. 'Tis edification to hear him converse; he professes the noblest sentiments.

Sir Oliver. Oh, plague of his sentiments! If he salutes me with a scrap of morality in his mouth, I shall be sick directly. But, however, don't mistake me, Sir Peter; I don't mean to defend Charles's errors. But before I form my judgment of either of them, I intend to make a trial of their hearts; and my friend Rowley and I have planned something for the purpose.

Rowley. And Sir Peter shall own for once he has been mistaken.

SIR PETER. Oh, my life on Joseph's honor!

SIR OLIVER. Well — come, give us a bottle of good wine, and we'll drink the lads' health, and tell you our scheme.

SIR PETER. *Allons,* then!

SIR OLIVER. And don't, Sir Peter, be so severe against your old friend's son. Odds my life! I am not sorry that he has run out of the course a little. For my part, I hate to see prudence clinging to the green suckers of youth; 'tis like ivy round a sapling and spoils the growth of the tree.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT III

SCENE I. SIR PETER TEAZLE'S

[*Enter* SIR PETER TEAZLE, SIR OLIVER SURFACE, *and* ROWLEY.]

SIR PETER. Well, then, we will see this fellow first, and have our wine afterwards. But how is this, Master Rowley? I don't see the jest[1] of your scheme.

ROWLEY. Why, sir, this Mr. Stanley, who[m] I was speaking of, is nearly related to them by their mother. He was a merchant in Dublin, but has been ruined by a series of undeserved misfortunes. He has applied, by letter, to Mr. Surface and Charles. From the former he has received nothing but evasive promises of future service, while Charles has done all that his extravagance has left him power to do; and he is, at this time, endeavoring to raise a sum of money, part of which, in the midst of his own distresses, I know he intends for the service of poor Stanley.

SIR OLIVER. Ah! he is my brother's son.

SIR PETER. Well, but how is Sir Oliver personally to —

ROWLEY. Why, sir, I will inform Charles and his brother that Stanley has obtained permission to apply personally to his friends; and, as they have neither of them ever seen him, let Sir Oliver assume his character, and he will have a fair oppor-

[1] gist, main point.

tunity of judging, at least, of the benevolence of their dispositions. And believe me, sir, you will find in the youngest brother one who, in the midst of folly and dissipation, has still, as our immortal bard expresses it, —

a heart to pity, and a hand
Open as day for melting charity.[1]

Sir Peter. Pshaw! What signifies his having an open hand or purse either when he has nothing left to give? Well, well, make the trial, if you please. But where is the fellow whom you brought for Sir Oliver to examine, relative to Charles's affairs?

Rowley. Below, waiting his commands, and no one can give him better intelligence. — This, Sir Oliver, is a friendly Jew, who, to do him justice, has done everything in his power to bring your nephew to a proper sense of his extravagance.

Sir Peter. Pray let us have him in.

Rowley. [*Apart to* Servant] Desire Mr. Moses to walk upstairs.

Sir Peter. But, pray, why should you suppose he will speak the truth?

Rowley. Oh, I have convinced him that he has no chance of recovering certain sums advanced to Charles but through the bounty of Sir Oliver, who he knows is arrived; so that you may depend on his fidelity to his own interests. I have also another evidence in my power, one Snake, whom I have detected in a matter little short of forgery, and shall speedily produce him to remove some of your prejudices.

Sir Peter. I have heard too much on that subject.

Rowley. Here comes the honest Israelite. —

[*Enter* Moses.]

This is Sir Oliver.

Sir Oliver. Sir, I understand you have lately had great dealings with my nephew Charles.

[1] Adapted from Shakespeare, "2 Henry IV," IV, iv, 31–32.

Moses. Yes, Sir Oliver, I have done all I could for him; but he was ruined before he came to me for assistance.

Sir Oliver. That was unlucky, truly; for you have had no opportunity of showing your talents.

Moses. None at all; I hadn't the pleasure of knowing his distresses till he was some thousands worse than nothing.

Sir Oliver. Unfortunate, indeed! But I suppose you have done all in your power for him, honest Moses?

Moses. Yes, he knows that. This very evening I was to have brought him a gentleman from the city, who does not know him, and will, I believe, advance him some money.

Sir Peter. What, one Charles has never had money from before?

Moses. Yes, Mr. Premium of Crutched Friars,[1] formerly a broker.

Sir Peter. Egad, Sir Oliver, a thought strikes me!— Charles, you say, does not know Mr. Premium?

Moses. Not at all.

Sir Peter. Now then, Sir Oliver, you may have a better opportunity of satisfying yourself than by an old romancing tale of a poor relation: go with my friend Moses, and represent Premium, and then I'll answer for it, you'll see your nephew in all his glory.

Sir Oliver. Egad, I like this idea better than the other, and I may visit Joseph afterwards as old Stanley.

Sir Peter. True — so you may.

Rowley. Well, this is taking Charles rather at a disadvantage, to be sure. However, Moses, you understand Sir Peter, and will be faithful?

Moses. You may depend upon me. — [*Looks at his watch.*] This is near the time I was to have gone.

Sir Oliver. I'll accompany you as soon as you please, Moses

[1] A street north of the Tower of London, named from an old monastery of Crossed, or Crutched, Friars; in the eastern part of the business district.

— But hold! I have forgot one thing — how the plague shall I be able to pass for a Jew?

Moses. There's no need — the principal is Christian.

Sir Oliver. Is he? I'm very sorry to hear it. But, then again, a'n't I rather too smartly dressed to look like a money lender?

Sir Peter. Not at all; 'twould not be out of character if you went in your own carriage — would it, Moses?

Moses. Not in the least.

Sir Oliver. Well, but how must I talk? there's certainly some cant of usury and mode of treating that I ought to know.

Sir Peter. Oh, there's not much to learn. The great point, as I take it, is to be exorbitant enough in your demands — hey, Moses?

Moses. Yes, that's a very great point.

Sir Oliver. I'll answer for't I'll not be wanting in that. I'll ask him eight or ten per cent on the loan, at least.

Moses. If you ask him no more than that, you'll be discovered immediately.

Sir Oliver. Hey! what the plague! how much then?

Moses. That depends upon the circumstances. If he appears not very anxious for the supply, you should require only forty or fifty per cent; but if you find him in great distress, and want the moneys very bad, you may ask double.

Sir Peter. A good honest trade you're learning, Sir Oliver!

Sir Oliver. Truly, I think so — and not unprofitable.

Moses. Then, you know, you haven't the moneys yourself, but are forced to borrow them for him of an old friend.

Sir Oliver. Oh! I borrow it of a friend, do I?

Moses. And your friend is an unconscionable dog, but you can't help that.

Sir Oliver. My friend an unconscionable dog?

Moses. Yes, and he himself has not the moneys by him, but is forced to sell stock at a great loss.

SIR OLIVER. He is forced to sell stock at a great loss, is he? Well, that's very kind of him.

SIR PETER. I'faith, Sir Oliver — Mr. Premium, I mean — you'll soon be master of the trade. But, Moses! would not you have him run out a little against the Annuity Bill?[1] That would be in character, I should think.

MOSES. Very much.

ROWLEY. And lament that a young man now must be at years of discretion before he is suffered to ruin himself?

MOSES. Aye, great pity!

SIR PETER. And abuse the public for allowing merit to an act whose only object is to snatch misfortune and imprudence from the rapacious gripe of usury, and give the minor a chance of inheriting his estate without being undone by coming into possession.

SIR OLIVER. So, so — Moses shall give me further instructions as we go together.

SIR PETER. You will not have much time, for your nephew lives hard by.

SIR OLIVER. Oh, never fear! my tutor appears so able that, though Charles lived in the next street, it must be my own fault if I am not a complete rogue before I turn the corner.

[*Exeunt* SIR OLIVER SURFACE *and* MOSES.]

SIR PETER. So, now, I think Sir Oliver will be convinced; you are partial, Rowley, and would have prepared Charles for the other plot.

ROWLEY. No, upon my word, Sir Peter.

SIR PETER. Well, go bring me this Snake, and I'll hear what he has to say presently. I see Maria, and want to speak with her.

[*Exit* ROWLEY.]

— I should be glad to be convinced my suspicions of Lady Teazle and Charles were unjust. I have never yet opened my mind on this subject to my friend Joseph — I am determined I will do it — he will give me his opinion sincerely.—

[1] A recent parliamentary bill (May, 1777), protecting minors against usurers.

[*Enter* MARIA.]

So, child, has Mr. Surface returned with you?

MARIA. No, sir; he was engaged.

SIR PETER. Well, Maria, do you not reflect, the more that you converse with that amiable young man, what return his partiality for you deserves?

MARIA. Indeed, Sir Peter, your frequent importunity on this subject distresses me extremely — you compel me to declare that I know no man who ever paid me a particular attention whom I would not prefer to Mr. Surface.

SIR PETER. So — here's perverseness! No, no, Maria, 'tis Charles only whom you would prefer. 'Tis evident his vices and follies have won your heart.

MARIA. This is unkind, sir. You know I have obeyed you in neither seeing nor corresponding with him; I have heard enough to convince me that he is unworthy my regard. Yet I cannot think it culpable if, while my understanding severely condemns his vices, my heart suggests some pity for his distresses.

SIR PETER. Well, well, pity him as much as you please; but give your heart and hand to a worthier object.

MARIA. Never to his brother!

SIR PETER. Go, perverse and obstinate! But take care, madam; you have never yet known what the authority of a guardian is: don't compel me to inform you of it.

MARIA. I can only say, you shall not have just reason. 'Tis true, by my father's will, I am for a short period bound to regard you as his substitute; but must cease to think you so when you would compel me to be miserable. [*Exit* MARIA.]

SIR PETER. Was ever man so crossed as I am, everything conspiring to fret me! I had not been involved in matrimony a fortnight, before her father, a hale and hearty man, died, on purpose, I believe, for the pleasure of plaguing me with the care of his daughter. — But here comes my helpmate! She appears

in great good humor. How happy I should be if I could tease her into loving me, though but a little!

[*Enter* Lady Teazle.]

Lady Teazle. Lud! Sir Peter, I hope you haven't been quarreling with Maria? It is not using me well to be ill-humored when I am not by.

Sir Peter. Ah, Lady Teazle, you might have the power to make me good-humored at all times.

Lady Teazle. I am sure I wish I had; for I want you to be in a charming sweet temper at this moment. Do be good-humored now, and let me have two hundred pounds, will you?

Sir Peter. Two hundred pounds; what, an't I to be in a good humor without paying for it? But speak to me thus, and i'faith there's nothing I could refuse you. You shall have it; but seal me a bond for the repayment.

Lady Teazle. Oh, no [*Offering her hand*] — there — my note of hand will do as well.

Sir Peter. And you shall no longer reproach me with not giving you an independent settlement. I mean shortly to surprise you; but shall we always live thus, hey?

Lady Teazle. If you please. I'm sure I don't care how soon we leave off quarreling, provided you'll own you were tired first.

Sir Peter. Well — then let our future contest be, who shall be most obliging.

Lady Teazle. I assure you, Sir Peter, good nature becomes you. You look now as you did before we were married, when you used to walk with me under the elms, and tell me stories of what a gallant you were in your youth; and chuck me under the chin, you would, and ask me if I thought I could love an old fellow who would deny me nothing — didn't you?

Sir Peter. Yes, yes, and you were as kind and attentive —

Lady Teazle. Aye, so I was, and would always take your part when my acquaintance used to abuse you, and turn you into ridicule.

Sir Peter. Indeed!

Lady Teazle. Aye, and when cousin Sophy has called you a stiff, peevish old bachelor, and laughed at me for thinking of marrying one who might be my father, I have always defended you, and said I didn't think you so ugly by any means and I dared say you'd make a very good sort of a husband.

Sir Peter. And you prophesied right; and we shall now be the happiest couple —

Lady Teazle. And never differ again?

Sir Peter. No, never! — though at the same time, indeed, my dear Lady Teazle, you must watch your temper very seriously; for in all our little quarrels, my dear, if you recollect, my love, you always began first.

Lady Teazle. I beg your pardon, my dear Sir Peter; indeed, you always gave the provocation.

Sir Peter. Now see, my angel! take care — contradicting isn't the way to keep friends.

Lady Teazle. Then don't you begin it, my love!

Sir Peter. There, now! you — you are going on. You don't perceive, my life, that you are just doing the very thing which you know always makes me angry.

Lady Teazle. Nay, you know, if you will be angry without any reason, my dear —

Sir Peter. There! now you want to quarrel again.

Lady Teazle. No, I am sure I don't; but, if you will be so peevish —

Sir Peter. There now! who begins first?

Lady Teazle. Why, you, to be sure. I said nothing — but there's no bearing your temper.

Sir Peter. No, no, madam; the fault's in your own temper.

Lady Teazle. Aye, you are just what my cousin Sophy said you would be.

Sir Peter. Your cousin Sophy is a forward, impertinent gypsy.

LADY TEAZLE. You are a great bear, I'm sure, to abuse my relations.

SIR PETER. Now may all the plagues of marriage be doubled on me, if ever I try to be friends with you any more!

LADY TEAZLE. So much the better.

SIR PETER. No, no, madam; 'tis evident you never cared a pin for me, and I was a madman to marry you — a pert, rural coquette, that had refused half the honest squires in the neighborhood!

LADY TEAZLE. And I am sure I was a fool to marry you — an old dangling bachelor, who was single at fifty only because he never could meet with anyone who would have him.

SIR PETER. Aye, aye, madam; but you were pleased enough to listen to me; you never had such an offer before.

LADY TEAZLE. No! didn't I refuse Sir Tivy Terrier, who everybody said would have been a better match? for his estate is just as good as yours, and he has broke his neck since we have been married.

SIR PETER. I have done with you, madam! You are an unfeeling, ungrateful — but there's an end of everything. I believe you capable of everything that is bad. Yes, madam, I now believe the reports relative to you and Charles, madam. Yes, madam, *you* and Charles are, not without grounds —

LADY TEAZLE. Take care, Sir Peter! you had better not insinuate any such thing! I'll not be suspected without cause, I promise you.

SIR PETER. Very well, madam! very well! A separate maintenance as soon as you please. Yes, madam, or a divorce! I'll make an example of myself for the benefit of all old bachelors. Let us separate, madam.

LADY TEAZLE. Agreed! agreed! And now, my dear Sir Peter, we are of a mind once more, we may be the happiest couple and never differ again, you know; ha! ha! ha! Well, you are going to be in a passion, I see, and I shall only interrupt you — so, bye! bye! [*Exit.*]

Sir Peter. Plagues and tortures! can't I make her angry either! Oh, I am the most miserable fellow! But I'll not bear her presuming to keep her temper; no! she may break my heart, but she shan't keep her temper. [*Exit.*]

Scene II. Charles Surface's *house*

[*Enter* Trip, Moses, *and* Sir Oliver Surface.]

Trip. Here, Master Moses! if you'll stay a moment, I'll try whether — what's the gentleman's name?

Sir Oliver. [*Aside to* Moses] Mr. Moses, what is my name?

Moses. Mr. Premium.

Trip. Premium — very well. [*Exit* Trip *taking snuff.*]

Sir Oliver. To judge by the servants, one wouldn't believe the master was ruined. But what! — sure, this was my brother's house?

Moses. Yes, sir; Mr. Charles bought it of Mr. Joseph, with the furniture, pictures, etc., just as the old gentleman left it. Sir Peter thought it a piece of extravagance in him.

Sir Oliver. In my mind the other's economy in selling it to him was more reprehensible by half.

[*Enter* Trip.]

Trip. My master says you must wait, gentlemen; he has company and can't speak with you yet.

Sir Oliver. If he knew who it was wanted to see him, perhaps he would not send such a message.

Trip. Yes, yes, sir; he knows you are here — I did not forget little Premium; no, no, no.

Sir Oliver. Very well; and I pray, sir, what may be your name?

Trip. Trip, sir; my name is Trip, at your service.

Sir Oliver. Well, then, Mr. Trip, you have a pleasant sort of place here, I guess?

Trip. Why, yes — here are three or four of us pass our time

agreeably enough; but then our wages are sometimes a little in arrear — and not very great either — but fifty pounds a year, and find our own bags[1] and bouquets.

Sir Oliver. [*Aside*] Bags and bouquets! halters and bastinadoes![2]

Trip. And apropos, Moses, have you been able to get me that little bill discounted?

Sir Oliver. [*Aside*] Wants to raise money too! — mercy on me! Has his distresses[3] too, I warrant, like a lord, and affects creditors and duns.

Moses. 'Twas not to be done, indeed, Mr. Trip.

Trip. Good lack, you surprise me! My friend Brush has indorsed it, and I thought when he put his name at the back of a bill 'twas the same as cash.

Moses. No, 'twouldn't do.

Trip. A small sum — but twenty pounds. Hark'ee, Moses, do you think you couldn't get it me by way of annuity?

Sir Oliver. [*Aside*] An annuity! ha! ha! a footman raise money by way of annuity! Well done, luxury, egad!

Moses. Well, but you must insure your place.

Trip. Oh, with all my heart! I'll insure my place, and my life too, if you please.

Sir Oliver. [*Aside*] It's more than I would your neck.

Moses. But is there nothing you could deposit?

Trip. Why, nothing capital of my master's wardrobe has dropped lately; but I could give you a mortgage on some of his winter clothes, with equity of redemption before November — or you shall have the reversion of the French velvet, or a post-obit[4] on the blue and silver; — these, I should think, Moses, with a few pair of point ruffles, as a collateral security — hey, my little fellow?

[1] Nets to hold the back hair of wigs.
[2] Punishment by beating the soles of the feet.
[3] A pun; in legal usage, seizures of goods not paid for.
[4] Bond payable after death of a specified person.

MOSES. Well, well.

[*Bell rings.*]

TRIP. Egad, I heard the bell! I believe, gentlemen, I can now introduce you. Don't forget the annuity, little Moses! This way, gentlemen, — I'll insure my place, you know.

SIR OLIVER. If the man be a shadow of the master, this is the temple of dissipation indeed! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. *Another room in the house*

[CHARLES SURFACE, CARELESS, *and friends, at a table with wine, etc.*]

CHARLES SURFACE. 'Fore Heaven, 'tis true! — there's the great degeneracy of the age. Many of our acquaintance have taste, spirit, and politeness; but, plague on't, they won't drink.

CARELESS. It is so, indeed, Charles! they give in to all the substantial luxuries of the table, and abstain from nothing but wine and wit. Oh, certainly society suffers by it intolerably! for now, instead of the social spirit of raillery that used to mantle over a glass of bright Burgundy, their conversation is become just like the Spa water they drink, which has all the pertness and flatulence of champagne, without its spirit or flavor.

1 GENTLEMAN. But what are they to do who love play better than wine?

CARELESS. True! there's Sir Harry diets himself for gaming, and is now under a hazard regimen.[1]

CHARLES SURFACE. Then he'll have the worst of it. What! you wouldn't train a horse for the course by keeping him from corn? For my part, egad, I am never so successful as when I am a little merry; let me throw on a bottle of champagne, and I never lose — at least, I never feel my losses, which is exactly the same thing.

[1] He abstains from drink in order to improve his play at dice.

2 GENTLEMAN. Aye, that I believe.

CHARLES SURFACE. And then, what man can pretend to be a believer in love who is an abjurer of wine? 'Tis the test by which the lover knows his own heart. Fill a dozen bumpers to a dozen beauties, and she that floats atop is the maid that has bewitched you.

CARELESS. Now then, Charles, be honest, and give us your real favorite.

CHARLES SURFACE. Why, I have withheld her only in compassion to you. If I toast her, you must give a round of her peers, which is impossible — on earth.

CARELESS. Oh! then we'll find some canonized vestals or heathen goddesses that will do, I warrant!

CHARLES SURFACE. Here then, bumpers, you rogues! bumpers! Maria! Maria! —

SIR HARRY. Maria who?

CHARLES SURFACE. Oh, damn the surname! — 'tis too formal to be registered in Love's calendar; but now, Sir Harry, beware, we must have beauty superlative.

CARELESS. Nay, never study,[1] Sir Harry; we'll stand to the toast, though your mistress should want an eye, and you know you have a song will excuse you.

SIR HARRY. Egad, so I have! and I'll give him the song instead of the lady.

SONG

Here's to the maiden of bashful fifteen;
Here's to the widow of fifty;
Here's to the flaunting extravagant quean[2]
And here's to the housewife that's thrifty.

CHORUS. Let the toast pass, —
Drink to the lass,
I'll warrant she'll prove an excuse for the glass.

[1] hesitate, fear. [2] impudent girl, hussy.

Here's to the charmer whose dimples we prize;
Now to the maid who has none, sir;
Here's to the girl with a pair of blue eyes,
And here's to the nymph with but *one*, sir.

CHORUS. Let the toast pass, etc.

Here's to the maid with a bosom of snow;
Now to her that's as brown as a berry;
Here's to the wife with a face full of woe,
And now to the girl that is merry.

CHORUS. Let the toast pass, etc.

For let 'em be clumsy, or let 'em be slim,
Young or ancient, I care not a feather;
So fill a pint bumper quite up to the brim,
And let us e'en toast them together.

CHORUS. Let the toast pass, etc.

ALL. Bravo! bravo!

[*Enter* TRIP, *and whispers* CHARLES SURFACE.]

CHARLES SURFACE. Gentlemen, you must excuse me a little. — Careless, take the chair, will you?

CARELESS. Nay, prithee, Charles, what now? This is one of your peerless beauties, I suppose, has dropped in by chance?

CHARLES SURFACE. No, faith! to tell you the truth, 'tis a Jew and a broker, who are come by appointment.

CARELESS. Oh, damn it! let's have the Jew in.

1 GENTLEMAN. Aye, and the broker too, by all means.

2 GENTLEMAN. Yes, yes, the Jew and the broker.

CHARLES SURFACE. Egad, with all my heart! — Trip, bid the gentlemen walk in — though there's one of them a stranger, I can tell you.

CARELESS. Charles, let us give them some generous Burgundy, and perhaps they'll grow conscientious.

CHARLES SURFACE. Oh, hang 'em, no! wine does but draw forth a man's natural qualities; and to make them drink would only be to whet their knavery.

[*Enter* TRIP, SIR OLIVER SURFACE, *and* MOSES.]

CHARLES SURFACE. So, honest Moses, walk in; walk in, pray, Mr. Premium — that's the gentleman's name, isn't it, Moses?

MOSES. Yes, sir.

CHARLES SURFACE. Set chairs, Trip — Sit down, Mr. Premium. — Glasses, Trip. — Sit down, Moses. — Come, Mr. Premium, I'll give you a sentiment; here's *Success to usury!* — Moses, fill the gentleman a bumper.

MOSES. *Success to usury!*

CARELESS. Right, Moses — usury is prudence and industry, and deserves to succeed.

SIR OLIVER. Then — *here's all the success it deserves!*

CARELESS. No, no, that won't do! Mr. Premium, you have demurred at the toast, and must drink it in a pint bumper.

1 GENTLEMAN. A pint bumper, at least.

MOSES. Oh, pray, sir, consider — Mr. Premium's a gentleman.

CARELESS. And therefore loves good wine.

2 GENTLEMAN. Give Moses a quart glass — this is mutiny, and a high contempt for the chair.

CARELESS. Here, now for't! I'll see justice done to the last drop of my bottle.

SIR OLIVER. Nay, pray, gentlemen — I did not expect this usage.

CHARLES SURFACE. No, hang it, you shan't; Mr. Premium's a stranger.

SIR OLIVER. [*Aside*] Odd! I wish I was well out of their company.

CARELESS. Plague on 'em then! if they don't drink, we'll not sit down with them. Come, Harry, the dice are in the next room.

— Charles, you'll join us when you have finished your business with the gentlemen?

CHARLES SURFACE. I will! I will! —

[*Exeunt.*]

Careless!

CARELESS. [*Returning*] Well!

CHARLES SURFACE. Perhaps I may want you.

CARELESS. Oh, you know I am always ready; word, note, or bond, 'tis all the same to me. [*Exit.*]

MOSES. Sir, this is Mr. Premium, a gentleman of the strictest honor and secrecy; and always performs what he undertakes. Mr. Premium, this is —

CHARLES SURFACE. Pshaw! have done. Sir, my friend Moses is a very honest fellow, but a little slow at expression; he'll be an hour giving us our titles. Mr. Premium, the plain state of the matter is this: I am an extravagant young fellow who wants to borrow money; you I take to be a prudent old fellow, who have got money to lend. I am blockhead enough to give fifty per cent sooner than not have it; and you, I presume, are rogue enough to take a hundred if you can get it. Now, sir, you see we are acquainted at once, and may proceed to business without farther ceremony.

SIR OLIVER. Exceeding frank, upon my word. I see, sir, you are not a man of many compliments.

CHARLES SURFACE. Oh, no, sir! plain dealing in business I always think best.

SIR OLIVER. Sir, I like you the better for it. However, you are mistaken in one thing: I have no money to lend, but I believe I could procure some of a friend; but then he's an unconscionable dog. Isn't he, Moses?

MOSES. But you can't help that.

SIR OLIVER. And must sell stock to accommodate you, mustn't he, Moses?

MOSES. Yes, indeed! You know I always speak the truth, and scorn to tell a lie!

CHARLES SURFACE. Right. People that speak truth generally

do. But these are trifles, Mr. Premium. What! I know money isn't to be bought without paying for't!

SIR OLIVER. Well, but what security could you give? You have no land, I suppose?

CHARLES SURFACE. Not a molehill, nor a twig, but what's in the boughpots out of the window!

SIR OLIVER. Nor any stock, I presume?

CHARLES SURFACE. Nothing but live stock — and that's only a few pointers and ponies. But pray, Mr. Premium, are you acquainted at all with any of my connections?

SIR OLIVER. Why, to say truth, I am.

CHARLES SURFACE. Then you must know that I have a dev'lish rich uncle in the East Indies, Sir Oliver Surface, from whom I have the greatest expectations?

SIR OLIVER. That you have a wealthy uncle, I have heard; but how your expectations will turn out is more, I believe, than you can tell.

CHARLES SURFACE. Oh, no! — there can be no doubt. They tell me I'm a prodigious favorite, and that he talks of leaving me everything.

SIR OLIVER. Indeed! this is the first I've heard of it.

CHARLES SURFACE. Yes, yes, 'tis just so. Moses knows 'tis true; don't you, Moses?

MOSES. Oh, yes! I'll swear to 't.

SIR OLIVER. [*Aside*] Egad, they'll persuade me presently I'm at Bengal.

CHARLES SURFACE. Now I propose, Mr. Premium, if it's agreeable to you, a post-obit on Sir Oliver's life; though at the same time the old fellow has been so liberal to me that I give you my word, I should be very sorry to hear that anything had happened to him.

SIR OLIVER. Not more than I should, I assure you. But the bond you mention happens to be just the worst security you could offer me — for I might live to a hundred and never see the principal.

CHARLES SURFACE. Oh, yes, you would! the moment Sir Oliver dies, you know, you would come on me for the money.

SIR OLIVER. Then I believe I should be the most unwelcome dun you ever had in your life.

CHARLES SURFACE. What! I suppose you're afraid that Sir Oliver is too good a life?

SIR OLIVER. No, indeed I am not; though I have heard he is as hale and healthy as any man of his years in Christendom.

CHARLES SURFACE. There again, now, you are misinformed. No, no, the climate has hurt him considerably, poor uncle Oliver. Yes, yes, he breaks apace, I'm told — and is so much altered lately that his nearest relations don't know him.

SIR OLIVER. No! Ha! ha! ha! so much altered lately that his nearest relations don't know him! Ha! ha! ha! egad — ha! ha! ha!

CHARLES SURFACE. Ha! ha! — you're glad to hear that, little Premium?

SIR OLIVER. No, no, I'm not.

CHARLES SURFACE. Yes, yes, you are — ha! ha! ha! — you know that mends your chance.

SIR OLIVER. But I'm told Sir Oliver is coming over; nay, some say he is actually arrived.

CHARLES SURFACE. Pshaw! sure I must know better than you whether he's come or not. No, no, rely on't he's at this moment at Calcutta. Isn't he, Moses?

MOSES. Oh, yes, certainly.

SIR OLIVER. Very true, as you say, you must know better than I, though I have it from pretty good authority. Haven't I, Moses?

MOSES. Yes, most undoubted!

SIR OLIVER. But, sir, as I understand you want a few hundreds immediately, is there nothing you could dispose of?

CHARLES SURFACE. How do you mean?

SIR OLIVER. For instance, now, I have heard that your father left behind him a great quantity of massy old plate.

CHARLES SURFACE. O lud! that's gone long ago. Moses can tell you how better than I can.

SIR OLIVER. [*Aside*] Good lack! all the family race-cups and corporation-bowls![1] — [*Aloud*] Then it was also supposed that his library was one of the most valuable and compact.

CHARLES SURFACE. Yes, yes, so it was — vastly too much so for a private gentleman. For my part, I was always of a communicative disposition, so I thought it a shame to keep so much knowledge to myself.

SIR OLIVER. [*Aside*] Mercy upon me! learning that had run in the family like an heirloom! — [*Aloud*] Pray, what are become of the books?

CHARLES SURFACE. You must inquire of the auctioneer, Master Premium, for I don't believe even Moses can direct you.

MOSES. I know nothing of books.

SIR OLIVER. So, so, nothing of the family property left, I suppose?

CHARLES SURFACE. Not much, indeed; unless you have a mind to the family pictures. I have got a room full of ancestors above; and if you have a taste for paintings, egad, you shall have 'em a bargain!

SIR OLIVER. Hey! what the devil! sure, you wouldn't sell your forefathers, would you?

CHARLES SURFACE. Every man of them, to the best bidder.

SIR OLIVER. What! your great-uncles and aunts?

CHARLES SURFACE. Aye, and my great-grandfathers and grandmothers too.

SIR OLIVER. [*Aside*] Now I give him up! — [*Aloud*] What the plague, have you no bowels for your own kindred? Odds life! do you take me for Shylock in the play, that you would raise money of me on your own flesh and blood?

CHARLES SURFACE. Nay, my little broker, don't be angry; what need you care, if you have your money's worth?

[1] cups won at races; bowls presented by the city.

SIR OLIVER. Well, I'll be the purchaser; I think I can dispose of the family canvas. — [*Aside*] Oh, I'll never forgive him this! never!

[*Enter* CARELESS.]

CARELESS. Come, Charles, what keeps you?

CHARLES SURFACE. I can't come yet. I'faith, we are going to have a sale abovestairs; here's little Premium will buy all my ancestors!

CARELESS. Oh, burn your ancestors!

CHARLES SURFACE. No, he may do that afterwards, if he pleases. Stay, Careless, we want you; egad, you shall be auctioneer — so come along with us.

CARELESS. Oh, have with you, if that's the case. Handle a hammer as well as a dicebox!

SIR OLIVER. [*Aside*] Oh, the profligates!

CHARLES SURFACE. Come, Moses, you shall be appraiser, if we want one. Gad's life, little Premium, you don't seem to like the business.

SIR OLIVER. Oh, yes, I do, vastly! Ha! ha! ha! yes, yes, I think it a rare joke to sell one's family by auction — ha! ha! — [*Aside*] Oh, the prodigal!

CHARLES SURFACE. To be sure! when a man wants money, where the plague should he get assistance if he can't make free with his own relations? [*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV

SCENE I. *Picture room at* CHARLES'S

[*Enter* CHARLES SURFACE, SIR OLIVER SURFACE, MOSES, *and* CARELESS.]

CHARLES SURFACE. Walk in, gentlemen, pray walk in; — here they are, the family of the Surfaces, up to the Conquest.

SIR OLIVER. And, in my opinion, a goodly collection.

CHARLES SURFACE. Aye, aye, these are done in the true spirit of portrait-painting; no *volontière grace*[1] and expression. Not like the works of your modern Raphaels, who give you the strongest resemblance, yet contrive to make your portrait independent of you; so that you may sink the original and not hurt the picture. No, no; the merit of these is the inveterate likeness — all stiff and awkward as the originals, and like nothing in human nature besides.

SIR OLIVER. Ah! we shall never see such figures of men again.

CHARLES SURFACE. I hope not. Well, you see, Master Premium, what a domestic character I am; here I sit of an evening surrounded by my family. But come, get to your pulpit, Mr. Auctioneer; here's an old gouty[2] chair of my father's will answer the purpose.

CARELESS. Aye, aye, this will do. But, Charles, I haven't a hammer; and what's an auctioneer without his hammer?

CHARLES SURFACE. Egad, that's true. What parchment have we here? Oh, our genealogy in full. [*Taking pedigree down*] Here, Careless, you shall have no common bit of mahogany; here's the family tree for you, you rogue! This shall be your hammer, and now you may knock down my ancestors with their own pedigree.

SIR OLIVER. [*Aside*] What an unnatural rogue — an *ex post facto* parricide![3]

CARELESS. Yes, yes, here's a bit of your generation indeed; — faith, Charles, this is the most convenient thing you could have found for the business, for 'twill not only serve as a hammer, but a catalogue into the bargain. Come, begin — A-going, a-going, a-going.

CHARLES SURFACE. Bravo, Careless! Well, here's my great-uncle, Sir Richard Raveline, a marvelous good general in his day, I assure you. He served in all the Duke of Marlborough's

[1] free artistic grace. [2] Weak in the legs or joints.

[3] A murderer of his ancestors after their death (*ex post facto*, after the deed is done).

wars, and got that cut over his eye at the battle of Malplaquet.[1] What say you, Mr. Premium? look at him — there's a hero! not cut out of his feathers, as your modern clipped captains are, but enveloped in wig and regimentals, as a general should be. What do you bid?

MOSES. Mr. Premium would have *you* speak.

CHARLES SURFACE. Why, then, he shall have him for ten pounds, and I'm sure that's not dear for a staff officer.

SIR OLIVER. [*Aside*] Heaven deliver me! his famous uncle Richard for ten pounds! — [*Aloud*] Very well, sir, I take him at that.

CHARLES SURFACE. Careless, knock down my uncle Richard. — Here, now, is a maiden sister of his, my great-aunt Deborah, done by Kneller,[2] in his best manner, and esteemed a very formidable likeness. There she is, you see, a shepherdess feeding her flock. You shall have her for five pounds ten — the sheep are worth the money.

SIR OLIVER. [*Aside*] Ah! poor Deborah! a woman who set such a value on herself! — [*Aloud*] Five pounds ten — she's mine.

CHARLES SURFACE. Knock down my aunt Deborah! Here, now, are two that were a sort of cousins of theirs. — You see, Moses, these pictures were done some time ago, when beaux wore wigs, and the ladies their own hair.

SIR OLIVER. Yes, truly, headdresses appear to have been a little lower in those days.

CHARLES SURFACE. Well, take that couple for the same.

MOSES. 'Tis a good bargain.

CHARLES SURFACE. Careless! — This, now, is a grandfather of my mother's, a learned judge, well known on the western circuit. — What do you rate him at, Moses?

MOSES. Four guineas.

CHARLES SURFACE. Four guineas! Gad's life, you don't bid

[1] Where Marlborough and the Allies defeated the French (1709).

[2] A fashionable portrait painter (1646–1723).

me the price of his wig. — Mr. Premium, you have more respect for the woolsack[1]; do let us knock his lordship down at fifteen.

Sir Oliver. By all means.

Careless. Gone!

Charles Surface. And there are two brothers of his, William and Walter Blunt, Esquires, both members of Parliament, and noted speakers; and, what's very extraordinary, I believe, this is the first time they were ever bought[2] or sold.

Sir Oliver. That is very extraordinary, indeed! I'll take them at your own price, for the honor of Parliament.

Careless. Well said, little Premium! I'll knock them down at forty.

Charles Surface. Here's a jolly fellow — I don't know what relation, but he was mayor of Manchester; take him at eight pounds.

Sir Oliver. No, no; six will do for the mayor.

Charles Surface. Come, make it guineas, and I'll throw you the two aldermen there into the bargain.

Sir Oliver. They're mine.

Charles Surface. Careless, knock down the mayor and aldermen. But, plague on't! we shall be all day retailing in this manner; do let us deal wholesale. What say you, little Premium? Give us three hundred pounds for the rest of the family in the lump.

Careless. Aye, aye, that will be the best way.

Sir Oliver. Well, well, anything to accommodate you; they are mine. But there is one portrait which you have always passed over.

Careless. What, that ill-looking little fellow over the settee?

Sir Oliver. Yes, sir, I mean that; though I don't think him so ill-looking a little fellow, by any means.

Charles Surface. What, that? Oh, that's my uncle Oliver! 'twas done before he went to India.

[1] the legal profession (*the head of which, the Lord Chancellor, sits on a cushion stuffed with wool in the House of Lords*). [2] bribed.

CARELESS. Your uncle Oliver! Gad, then you'll never be friends, Charles. That, now, to me, is as stern a looking rogue as ever I saw; an unforgiving eye, and a damned disinheriting countenance! an inveterate knave, depend on't. Don't you think so, little Premium?

SIR OLIVER. Upon my soul, sir, I do not; I think it is as honest a looking face as any in the room, dead or alive. But I suppose uncle Oliver goes with the rest of the lumber?

CHARLES SURFACE. No, hang it! I'll not part with poor Noll. The old fellow has been very good to me, and, egad, I'll keep his picture while I've a room to put it in.

SIR OLIVER. [*Aside*] The rogue 's my nephew after all! — [*Aloud*] But, sir, I have somehow taken a fancy to that picture.

CHARLES SURFACE. I'm sorry for't, for you certainly will not have it. Oons, haven't you got enough of them?

SIR OLIVER. [*Aside*] I forgive him everything! — [*Aloud*] But, sir, when I take a whim in my head, I don't value money. I'll give you as much for that as for all the rest.

CHARLES SURFACE. Don't tease me, master broker; I tell you I'll not part with it, and there's an end of it.

SIR OLIVER. [*Aside*] How like his father the dog is! — [*Aloud*] Well, well, I have done.— [*Aside*] I did not perceive it before, but I think I never saw such a striking resemblance.— [*Aloud*] Here is a draft for your sum.

CHARLES SURFACE. Why, 'tis for eight hundred pounds!

SIR OLIVER. You will not let Sir Oliver go?

CHARLES SURFACE. Zounds! no! I tell you, once more.

SIR OLIVER. Then never mind the difference, we'll balance that another time. But give me your hand on the bargain; you are an honest fellow, Charles — I beg pardon, sir, for being so free.— Come, Moses.

CHARLES SURFACE. Egad, this is a whimsical old fellow! — But hark'ee, Premium, you'll prepare lodgings for these gentlemen.

SIR OLIVER. Yes, yes, I'll send for them in a day or two.

CHARLES SURFACE. But hold; do now send a genteel con-

veyance for them, for, I assure you, they were most of them used to ride in their own carriages.

SIR OLIVER. I will, I will — for all but Oliver.

CHARLES SURFACE. Aye, all but the little nabob.[1]

SIR OLIVER. You're fixed on that?

CHARLES SURFACE. Peremptorily.

SIR OLIVER. [*Aside*] A dear extravagant rogue! — [*Aloud*] Good day! — Come, Moses. — [*Aside*] Let me hear now who calls him profligate.

[*Exeunt* SIR OLIVER *and* MOSES.]

CARELESS. Why, this is the oddest genius of the sort I ever saw!

CHARLES SURFACE. Egad, he's the prince of brokers, I think. I wonder how Moses got acquainted with so honest a fellow. — Ha! here's Rowley. — Do, Careless, say I'll join the company in a few moments.

CARELESS. I will — but don't let that old blockhead persuade you to squander any of that money on old musty debts, or any such nonsense; for tradesmen, Charles, are the most exorbitant fellows.

CHARLES SURFACE. Very true, and paying them is only encouraging them.

CARELESS. Nothing else.

CHARLES SURFACE. Aye, aye, never fear. —

[*Exit* CARELESS.]

So! this was an odd fellow, indeed. Let me see, two thirds of this is mine by right, five hundred and thirty odd pounds. 'Fore Heaven! I find one's ancestors are more valuable relations than I took them for! — Ladies and gentlemen, your most obedient and very grateful servant.

[*Bows ceremoniously to the pictures.*]

[*Enter* ROWLEY.]

Ha! old Rowley! egad, you are just come in time to take leave of your old acquaintance.

[1] As used here, one who has become rich in India.

ROWLEY. Yes, I heard they were a-going. But I wonder you can have such spirits under so many distresses.

CHARLES SURFACE. Why, there's the point! my distresses are so many that I can't afford to part with my spirits; but I shall be rich and splenetic,[1] all in good time. However, I suppose you are surprised that I am not more sorrowful at parting with so many near relations; to be sure, 'tis very affecting, but you see they never move a muscle, so why should I?

ROWLEY. There's no making you serious a moment.

CHARLES SURFACE. Yes, faith, I am so now. Here, my honest Rowley, here, get me this changed directly, and take a hundred pounds of it immediately to old Stanley.

ROWLEY. A hundred pounds! Consider only —

CHARLES SURFACE. Gad's life, don't talk about it! poor Stanley's wants are pressing; and if you don't make haste, we shall have someone call that has a better right to the money.

ROWLEY. Ah! there's the point! I never will cease dunning you with the old proverb —

CHARLES SURFACE. *Be just before you're generous.* — Why, so I would if I could; but Justice is an old, lame, hobbling beldame, and I can't get her to keep pace with Generosity, for the soul of me.

ROWLEY. Yet, Charles, believe me, one hour's reflection —

CHARLES SURFACE. Aye, aye, it's all very true; but, hark'ee, Rowley, while I have, by Heaven I'll give; so damn your economy and now for hazard. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. *The parlor*

[*Enter* SIR OLIVER SURFACE *and* MOSES.]

MOSES. Well, sir, I think, as Sir Peter said, you have seen Mr. Charles in high glory; 'tis great pity he's so extravagant.

SIR OLIVER. True, but he would not sell my picture.

MOSES. And loves wine and women so much.

[1] fretful, affected with spleen.

SIR OLIVER. But he would not sell my picture.

MOSES. And games so deep.

SIR OLIVER. But he would not sell my picture. Oh, here's Rowley.

[*Enter* ROWLEY.]

ROWLEY. So, Sir Oliver, I find you have made a purchase —

SIR OLIVER. Yes, yes, our young rake has parted with his ancestors like old tapestry.

ROWLEY. And here has he commissioned me to redeliver you part of the purchase money — I mean, though, in your necessitous character of old Stanley.

MOSES. Ah! there is the pity of all; he is so damned charitable.

ROWLEY. And I left a hosier and two tailors in the hall, who, I'm sure, won't be paid, and this hundred would satisfy them.

SIR OLIVER. Well, well, I'll pay his debts, and his benevolence too. But now I am no more a broker, and you shall introduce me to the elder brother as old Stanley.

ROWLEY. Not yet awhile; Sir Peter, I know, means to call there about this time.

[*Enter* TRIP.]

TRIP. Oh, gentlemen, I beg pardon for not showing you out; this way — Moses, a word.

[*Exeunt* TRIP *and* MOSES.]

SIR OLIVER. There's a fellow for you! Would you believe it, that puppy intercepted the Jew on our coming, and wanted to raise money before he got to his master!

ROWLEY. Indeed!

SIR OLIVER. Yes, they are now planning an annuity business. Ah, Master Rowley, in my days servants were content with the follies of their masters, when they were worn a little threadbare; but now they have their vices, like their birthday[1] clothes, with the gloss on. [*Exeunt.*]

[1] For the state ball on the anniversary of the king's birthday; see Pope's "The Rape of the Lock," I, 23: "A Youth more glitt'ring than a Birth-night Beau."

SCENE III. *A library in* JOSEPH SURFACE'S *house*

[*Enter* JOSEPH SURFACE *and* Servant.]

JOSEPH SURFACE. No letter from Lady Teazle?

SERVANT. No, sir.

JOSEPH SURFACE. [*Aside*] I am surprised she has not sent, if she is prevented from coming. Sir Peter certainly does not suspect me. Yet I wish I may not lose the heiress, through the scrape I have drawn myself into with the wife; however, Charles's imprudence and bad character are great points in my favor.

[*Knocking heard without*]

SERVANT. Sir, I believe that must be Lady Teazle.

JOSEPH SURFACE. Hold! See whether it is or not, before you go to the door; I have a particular message for you if it should be my brother.

SERVANT. 'Tis her ladyship, sir; she always leaves her chair at the milliner's in the next street.

JOSEPH SURFACE. Stay, stay; draw that screen before the window — that will do; — my opposite neighbor is a maiden lady of so anxious a temper. —

[Servant *draws the screen, and exit.*]

I have a difficult hand to play in this affair. Lady Teazle has lately suspected my views on Maria; but she must by no means be let into that secret, — at least, till I have her more in my power.

[*Enter* LADY TEAZLE.]

LADY TEAZLE. What, sentiment in soliloquy now? Have you been very impatient? O lud! don't pretend to look grave. I vow I couldn't come before.

JOSEPH SURFACE. O madam, punctuality is a species of constancy, a very unfashionable quality in a lady.

LADY TEAZLE. Upon my word, you ought to pity me. Do you know Sir Peter is grown so ill-natured to me of late, and so jealous of Charles too — that's the best of the story, isn't it?

JOSEPH SURFACE. [*Aside*] I am glad my scandalous friends keep that up.

LADY TEAZLE. I am sure I wish he would let Maria marry him, and then perhaps he would be convinced; don't you, Mr. Surface?

JOSEPH SURFACE. [*Aside*] Indeed I do not. — [*Aloud*] Oh, certainly I do! for then my dear Lady Teazle would also be convinced how wrong her suspicions were of my having any design on the silly girl.

LADY TEAZLE. Well, well, I'm inclined to believe you. But isn't it provoking, to have the most ill-natured things said of one? And there's my friend Lady Sneerwell has circulated I don't know how many scandalous tales of me, and all without any foundation too; that's what vexes me.

JOSEPH SURFACE. Aye, madam, to be sure, that is the provoking circumstance — without foundation; yes, yes, there's the mortification, indeed; for when a scandalous story is believed against one, there certainly is no comfort like the consciousness of having deserved it.

LADY TEAZLE. No, to be sure, then I'd forgive their malice; but to attack me, who am really so innocent, and who never say an ill-natured thing of anybody — that is, of any friend; and then Sir Peter, too, to have him so peevish, and so suspicious, when I know the integrity of my own heart — indeed 'tis monstrous!

JOSEPH SURFACE. But, my dear Lady Teazle, 'tis your own fault if you suffer it. When a husband entertains a groundless suspicion of his wife, and withdraws his confidence from her, the original compact is broken, and she owes it to the honor of her sex to outwit him.

LADY TEAZLE. Indeed! So that, if he suspects me without cause, it follows that the best way of curing his jealousy is to give him reason for't?

JOSEPH SURFACE. Undoubtedly — for your husband should never be deceived in you; and in that case it becomes you to be frail in compliment to his discernment.

LADY TEAZLE. To be sure, what you say is very reasonable, and when the consciousness of my innocence —

JOSEPH SURFACE. Ah, my dear madam, there is the great mistake! 'tis this very conscious innocence that is of the greatest prejudice to you. What is it makes you negligent of forms, and careless of the world's opinion? why, the consciousness of your own innocence. What makes you thoughtless in your conduct, and apt to run into a thousand little imprudences? why, the consciousness of your own innocence. What makes you impatient of Sir Peter's temper, and outrageous at his suspicions? why, the consciousness of your innocence.

LADY TEAZLE. 'Tis very true!

JOSEPH SURFACE. Now, my dear Lady Teazle, if you would but once make a trifling *faux pas*, you can't conceive how cautious you would grow, and how ready to humor and agree with your husband.

LADY TEAZLE. Do you think so?

JOSEPH SURFACE. Oh, I am sure on't; and then you would find all scandal would cease at once, for — in short, your character at present is like a person in a plethora, absolutely dying from too much health.

LADY TEAZLE. So, so; then I perceive your prescription is, that I must sin in my own defense, and part with my virtue to secure my reputation?

JOSEPH SURFACE. Exactly so, upon my credit, ma'am.

LADY TEAZLE. Well, certainly this is the oddest doctrine, and the newest receipt for avoiding calumny!

JOSEPH SURFACE. An infallible one, believe me. Prudence, like experience, must be paid for.

LADY TEAZLE. Why, if my understanding were once convinced —

JOSEPH SURFACE. Oh, certainly, madam, your understanding should be convinced. Yes, yes — Heaven forbid I should persuade you to do anything you thought wrong. No, no, I have too much honor to desire it.

LADY TEAZLE. Don't you think we may as well leave *honor* out of the question?

JOSEPH SURFACE. Ah, the ill effects of your country education, I see, still remain with you.

LADY TEAZLE. I doubt they do indeed; and I will fairly own to you that if I could be persuaded to do wrong, it would be by Sir Peter's ill usage sooner than your *honorable logic*, after all.

JOSEPH SURFACE. Then, by this hand, which he is unworthy of — [*Taking her hand*]

[*Reënter* Servant.]

'Sdeath, you blockhead — what do you want?

SERVANT. I beg your pardon, sir, but I thought you would not choose Sir Peter to come up without announcing him.

JOSEPH SURFACE. Sir Peter! — Oons — the devil!

LADY TEAZLE. Sir Peter! O lud! I'm ruined! I'm ruined!

SERVANT. Sir, 'twasn't I let him in.

LADY TEAZLE. Oh! I'm quite undone! What will become of me? Now, Mr. Logic — oh! he's on the stairs — I'll get behind here — and if ever I'm so imprudent again —

[*Goes behind the screen.*]

JOSEPH SURFACE. Give me that book.

[*Sits down.* Servant *pretends to adjust his hair.*]

[*Enter* SIR PETER.]

SIR PETER. Aye, ever improving himself — Mr. Surface, Mr. Surface —

JOSEPH SURFACE. Oh, my dear Sir Peter, I beg your pardon. — [*Gaping, throws away the book.*] I have been dozing over a stupid book. Well, I am much obliged to you for this call. You haven't been here, I believe, since I fitted up this room. Books, you know, are the only things in which I am a coxcomb.

SIR PETER. 'Tis very neat indeed. Well, well, that's proper; and you can make even your screen a source of knowledge — hung, I perceive, with maps.

JOSEPH SURFACE. Oh, yes, I find great use in that screen.

SIR PETER. I dare say you must, certainly, when you want to find anything in a hurry.

JOSEPH SURFACE. [*Aside*] Aye, or to hide anything in a hurry either.

SIR PETER. Well, I have a little private business —

JOSEPH SURFACE. [*To the* Servant] You need not stay.

SERVANT. No, sir. [*Exit.*]

JOSEPH SURFACE. Here's a chair, Sir Peter — I beg —

SIR PETER. Well, now we are alone, there is a subject, my dear friend, on which I wish to unburden my mind to you — a point of the greatest moment to my peace; in short, my good friend, Lady Teazle's conduct of late has made me extremely unhappy.

JOSEPH SURFACE. Indeed! I am very sorry to hear it.

SIR PETER. Aye, 'tis too plain she has not the least regard for me; but, what's worse, I have pretty good authority to suppose she has formed an attachment to another.

JOSEPH SURFACE. Indeed! you astonish me!

SIR PETER. Yes! and, between ourselves, I think I've discovered the person.

JOSEPH SURFACE. How! you alarm me exceedingly.

SIR PETER. Aye, my dear friend, I knew you would sympathize with me!

JOSEPH SURFACE. Yes, believe me, Sir Peter, such a discovery would hurt me just as much as it would you.

SIR PETER. I am convinced of it. Ah! it is a happiness to have a friend whom we can trust even with one's family secrets. But have you no guess who I mean?

JOSEPH SURFACE. I haven't the most distant idea. It can't be Sir Benjamin Backbite!

SIR PETER. Oh, no! What say you to Charles?

JOSEPH SURFACE. My brother! impossible!

SIR PETER. Oh, my dear friend, the goodness of your own heart misleads you. You judge of others by yourself.

JOSEPH SURFACE. Certainly, Sir Peter, the heart that is conscious of its own integrity is ever slow to credit another's treachery.

SIR PETER. True; but your brother has no sentiment — you never hear him talk so.

JOSEPH SURFACE. Yet I can't but think Lady Teazle herself has too much principle.

SIR PETER. Aye; but what is principle against the flattery of a handsome, lively young fellow?

JOSEPH SURFACE. That's very true.

SIR PETER. And there's, you know, the difference of our ages makes it very improbable that she should have any very great affection for me; and if she were to be frail, and I were to make it public, why the town would only laugh at me, the foolish old bachelor, who had married a girl.

JOSEPH SURFACE. That's true, to be sure — they would laugh.

SIR PETER. Laugh! aye, and make ballads, and paragraphs, and the devil knows what of me.

JOSEPH SURFACE. No, you must never make it public.

SIR PETER. But then again — that the nephew of my old friend, Sir Oliver, should be the person to attempt such a wrong, hurts me more nearly.

JOSEPH SURFACE. Aye, there's the point. When ingratitude barbs the dart of injury, the wound has double danger in it.

SIR PETER. Aye — I, that was, in a manner, left his guardian; in whose house he had been so often entertained; who never in my life denied him — my advice!

JOSEPH SURFACE. Oh, 'tis not to be credited! There may be a man capable of such baseness, to be sure; but, for my part, till you can give me positive proofs, I cannot but doubt it. However, if it should be proved on him, he is no longer a brother of mine — I disclaim kindred with him; for the man who can break the laws of hospitality, and tempt the wife of his friend, deserves to be branded as the pest of society.

Sir Peter. What a difference there is between you! What noble sentiments!

Joseph Surface. Yet I cannot suspect Lady Teazle's honor.

Sir Peter. I am sure I wish to think well of her, and to remove all ground of quarrel between us. She has lately reproached me more than once with having made no settlement on her; and, in our last quarrel, she almost hinted that she should not break her heart if I was dead. Now, as we seem to differ in our ideas of expense, I have resolved she shall have her own way, and be her own mistress in that respect for the future; and, if I were to die, she will find I have not been inattentive to her interest while living. Here, my friend, are the drafts of two deeds, which I wish to have your opinion on. By one, she will enjoy eight hundred a year independent while I live; and, by the other, the bulk of my fortune at my death.

Joseph Surface. This conduct, Sir Peter, is indeed truly generous. — [*Aside*] I wish it may not corrupt my pupil.

Sir Peter. Yes, I am determined she shall have no cause to complain, though I would not have her acquainted with the latter instance of my affection yet awhile.

Joseph Surface. [*Aside*] Nor I, if I could help it.

Sir Peter. And now, my dear friend, if you please, we will talk over the situation of your affairs with Maria.

Joseph Surface. [*Softly*] Oh, no, Sir Peter; another time, if you please.

Sir Peter. I am sensibly chagrined at the little progress you seem to make in her affections.

Joseph Surface. [*Softly*] I beg you will not mention it. What are my disappointments when your happiness is in debate! — [*Aside*] 'Sdeath, I shall be ruined every way!

Sir Peter. And though you are so averse to my acquainting Lady Teazle with your passion for Maria, I'm sure she's not your enemy in the affair.

Joseph Surface. Pray, Sir Peter, now oblige me. I am really too much affected by the subject we have been speaking of to

bestow a thought on my own concerns. The man who is intrusted with his friend's distresses can never —

[*Enter* Servant.]

Well, sir?

SERVANT. Your brother, sir, is speaking to a gentleman in the street, and says he knows you are within.

JOSEPH SURFACE. 'Sdeath, blockhead, I'm not within — I'm out for the day.

SIR PETER. Stay — hold — a thought has struck me: — you shall be at home.

JOSEPH SURFACE. Well, well, let him up. —

[*Exit* Servant.]

[*Aside*] He'll interrupt Sir Peter, however.

SIR PETER. Now, my good friend, oblige me, I entreat you. Before Charles comes, let me conceal myself somewhere; then do you tax him on the point we have been talking, and his answer may satisfy me at once.

JOSEPH SURFACE. Oh, fie, Sir Peter! would you have me join in so mean a trick? — to trapan my brother too?

SIR PETER. Nay, you tell me you are sure he is innocent; if so, you do him the greatest service by giving him an opportunity to clear himself, and you will set my heart at rest. Come, you shall not refuse me; [*Going up*] here, behind the screen will be — Hey! what the devil! there seems to be one listener there already — I'll swear I saw a petticoat!

JOSEPH SURFACE. Ha! ha! ha! Well, this is ridiculous enough. I'll tell you, Sir Peter, though I hold a man of intrigue to be a most despicable character, yet, you know, it does not follow that one is to be an absolute Joseph either! Hark'ee, 'tis a little French milliner, a silly rogue that plagues me; and having some character to lose, on your coming, sir, she ran behind the screen.

SIR PETER. Ah, you rogue! But egad, she has overheard all I have been saying of my wife.

JOSEPH SURFACE. Oh, 'twill never go any farther, you may depend upon it!

SIR PETER. No! then, faith, let her hear it out. — Here's a closet will do as well.

JOSEPH SURFACE. Well, go in there.

SIR PETER. Sly rogue! sly rogue! [*Going into the closet*]

JOSEPH SURFACE. A narrow escape, indeed! and a curious situation I'm in, to part man and wife in this manner.

LADY TEAZLE. [*Peeping*] Couldn't I steal off?

JOSEPH SURFACE. Keep close, my angel!

SIR PETER. [*Peeping*] Joseph, tax him home.

JOSEPH SURFACE. Back, my dear friend!

LADY TEAZLE. [*Peeping*] Couldn't you lock Sir Peter in?

JOSEPH SURFACE. Be still, my life!

SIR PETER. [*Peeping*] You're sure the little milliner won't blab?

JOSEPH SURFACE. In, in, my good Sir Peter! — 'Fore Gad, I wish I had a key to the door.

[*Enter* CHARLES SURFACE.]

CHARLES SURFACE. Holla! brother, what has been the matter? Your fellow would not let me up at first. What! have you had a Jew or a wench with you?

JOSEPH SURFACE. Neither, brother, I assure you.

CHARLES SURFACE. But what has made Sir Peter steal off? I thought he had been with you.

JOSEPH SURFACE. He *was*, brother; but, hearing you were coming, he did not choose to stay.

CHARLES SURFACE. What! was the old gentleman afraid I wanted to borrow money of him?

JOSEPH SURFACE. No, sir; but I am sorry to find, Charles, you have lately given that worthy man grounds for great uneasiness.

CHARLES SURFACE. Yes, they tell me I do that to a great many worthy men. But how so, pray?

JOSEPH SURFACE. To be plain with you, brother, he thinks you are endeavoring to gain Lady Teazle's affections from him.

CHARLES TEAZLE. Who, I? O lud! not I, upon my word. — Ha! ha! ha! ha! so the old fellow has found out that he has got a young wife, has he? — or, what is worse, Lady Teazle has found out she has an old husband?

JOSEPH SURFACE. This is no subject to jest on, brother. He who can laugh —

CHARLES SURFACE. True, true, as you were going to say — then, seriously, I never had the least idea of what you charge me with, upon my honor.

JOSEPH SURFACE. [*Aloud*] Well, it will give Sir Peter great satisfaction to hear this.

CHARLES SURFACE. To be sure, I once thought the lady seemed to have taken a fancy to me; but, upon my soul, I never gave her the least encouragement. Besides, you know my attachment to Maria.

JOSEPH SURFACE. But sure, brother, even if Lady Teazle had betrayed the fondest partiality for you —

CHARLES SURFACE. Why, look'ee, Joseph, I hope I shall never deliberately do a dishonorable action; but if a pretty woman was purposely to throw herself in my way — and that pretty woman married to a man old enough to be her father —

JOSEPH SURFACE. Well!

CHARLES SURFACE. Why, I believe I should be obliged to borrow a little of your morality, that's all. But, brother, do you know now that you surprise me exceedingly, by naming *me* with Lady Teazle; for, 'faith, I always understood you were her favorite.

JOSEPH SURFACE. Oh, for shame, Charles! This retort is foolish.

CHARLES SURFACE. Nay, I swear I have seen you exchange such significant glances —

JOSEPH SURFACE. Nay, nay, sir, this is no jest.

CHARLES SURFACE. Egad, I'm serious! Don't you remember one day, when I called here —

JOSEPH SURFACE. Nay, prithee, Charles —

CHARLES SURFACE. And found you together —

JOSEPH SURFACE. Zounds, sir, I insist —

CHARLES SURFACE. And another time when your servant —

JOSEPH SURFACE. Brother, brother, a word with you! — [*Aside*] Gad, I must stop him.

CHARLES SURFACE. Informed, I say, that —

JOSEPH SURFACE. Hush! I beg your pardon, but Sir Peter has overheard all we have been saying. I knew you would clear yourself, or I should not have consented.

CHARLES SURFACE. How, Sir Peter! Where is he?

JOSEPH SURFACE. Softly, there! [*Points to the closet.*]

CHARLES SURFACE. Oh, 'fore Heaven, I'll have him out. Sir Peter, come forth!

JOSEPH SURFACE. No, no —

CHARLES SURFACE. I say, Sir Peter, come into court. — [*Pulls in* SIR PETER.] What! my old guardian! — What! turn inquisitor, and take evidence incog.?[1]

SIR PETER. Give me your hand, Charles — I believe I have suspected you wrongfully; but you mustn't be angry with Joseph — 'twas my plan!

CHARLES SURFACE. Indeed!

SIR PETER. But I acquit you. I promise you I don't think near so ill of you as I did; what I have heard has given me great satisfaction.

CHARLES SURFACE. Egad, then, 'twas lucky you didn't hear any more. [*Apart to* JOSEPH] Wasn't it, Joseph?

SIR PETER. Ah! you would have retorted on him.

CHARLES SURFACE. Ah, aye, that was a joke.

SIR PETER. Yes, yes, I know his honor too well.

CHARLES SURFACE. But you might as well have suspected

[1] incognito, with his identity unknown.

him as *me* in this matter, for all that. [*Apart to* Joseph] Mightn't he, Joseph?

Sir Peter. Well, well, I believe you.

Joseph Surface. [*Aside*] Would they were both well out of the room!

Sir Peter. And in the future, perhaps, we may not be such strangers.

[*Enter* Servant, *and whispers* Joseph Surface.]

Joseph Surface. Gentlemen, I beg pardon — I must wait on you downstairs; here is a person come on particular business.

Charles Surface. Well, you can see him in another room. Sir Peter and I have not met a long time, and I have something to say to him.

Joseph Surface. [*Aside*] They must not be left together. — [*Aloud*] I'll send this man away, and return directly. — [*Apart to* Sir Peter *and goes out*] Sir Peter, not a word of the French milliner.

Sir Peter. [*Apart to* Joseph] I! not for the world! — Ah, Charles, if you associated more with your brother, one might indeed hope for your reformation. He is a man of sentiment. Well, there is nothing in the world so noble as a man of sentiment.

Charles Surface. Pshaw! he is too moral by half; and so apprehensive of his good name, as he calls it, that I suppose he would as soon let a priest into his house as a girl.

Sir Peter. No, no, — come, come, — you wrong him. No, no! Joseph is no rake, but he is no such saint either, in that respect. — [*Aside*] I have a great mind to tell him — we should have a laugh at Joseph.

Charles Surface. Oh, hang him! he's a very anchorite, a young hermit!

Sir Peter. Hark'ee — you must not abuse him; he may chance to hear of it again, I promise you.

Charles Surface. Why, you won't tell him?

Sir Peter. No — but — this way. — [*Aside*] Egad, I'll tell

him. — [*Aloud*] Hark'ee — have you a mind to have a good laugh at Joseph?

CHARLES SURFACE. I should like it of all things.

SIR PETER. Then, i'faith, we will! I'll be quit with him for discovering me. He had a girl with him when I called.

CHARLES SURFACE. What! Joseph? you jest.

SIR PETER. Hush! — a little French milliner — and the best of the jest is — she's in the room now.

CHARLES SURFACE. The devil she is!

SIR PETER. Hush! I tell you. [*Points to the screen.*]

CHARLES SURFACE. Behind the screen! 'Slife, let's unveil her!

SIR PETER. No, no, he's coming; — you shan't, indeed!

CHARLES SURFACE. Oh, egad, we'll have a peep at the little milliner!

SIR PETER. Not for the world! — Joseph will never forgive me.

CHARLES SURFACE. I'll stand by you —

SIR PETER. Odds, here he is!

[JOSEPH SURFACE *enters just as* CHARLES SURFACE *throws down the screen.*]

CHARLES SURFACE. Lady Teazle, by all that's wonderful.

SIR PETER. Lady Teazle, by all that's damnable!

CHARLES SURFACE. Sir Peter, this is one of the smartest French milliners I ever saw. Egad, you seem all to have been diverting yourselves here at hide and seek, and I don't see who is out of the secret. Shall I beg your ladyship to inform me? Not a word! — Brother, will you be pleased to explain this matter? What! is Morality dumb too? — Sir Peter, though I found you in the dark, perhaps you are not so now! All mute! — Well — though I can make nothing of the affair, I suppose you perfectly understand one another; so I'll leave you to yourselves. — [*Going*] Brother, I'm sorry to find you have given that worthy man cause for so much uneasiness — Sir Peter! there's nothing in the world so noble as a man of sentiment! [*Exit* CHARLES.]

[*They stand for some time looking at each other.*]

JOSEPH SURFACE. Sir Peter — notwithstanding — I confess — that appearances are against me — if you will afford me your patience — I make no doubt — but I shall explain everything to your satisfaction.

SIR PETER. If you please, sir.

JOSEPH SURFACE. The fact is, sir, that Lady Teazle, knowing my pretensions to your ward Maria — I say, sir, Lady Teazle, being apprehensive of the jealousy of your temper — and knowing my friendship to the family — she, sir, I say — called here — in order that — I might explain these pretensions — but on your coming — being apprehensive — as I said — of your jealousy — she withdrew — and this, you may depend on it, is the whole truth of the matter.

SIR PETER. A very clear account, upon my word; and I dare swear the lady will vouch for every article of it.

LADY TEAZLE. For not one word of it, Sir Peter!

SIR PETER. How! don't you think it worth while to agree in the lie?

LADY TEAZLE. There is not one syllable of truth in what that gentleman has told you.

SIR PETER. I believe you, upon my soul, ma'am!

JOSEPH SURFACE. [*Aside to* LADY TEAZLE] 'Sdeath, madam, will you betray me?

LADY TEAZLE. Good Mr. Hypocrite, by your leave, I'll speak for myself.

SIR PETER. Aye, let her alone, sir; you'll find she'll make out a better story than you, without prompting.

LADY TEAZLE. Hear me, Sir Peter — I came hither on no matter relating to your ward, and even ignorant of this gentleman's pretensions to her. But I came, seduced by his insidious arguments, at least to listen to his pretended passion, if not to sacrifice your honor to his baseness.

SIR PETER. Now I believe the truth is coming, indeed!

JOSEPH SURFACE. The woman's mad!

LADY TEAZLE. No, sir; she has recovered her senses, and

your own arts have furnished her with the means. — Sir Peter, I do not expect you to credit me — but the tenderness you expressed for me, when I am sure you could not think I was a witness to it, has penetrated so to my heart that had I left the place without the shame of this discovery, my future life should have spoken the sincerity of my gratitude. As for that smooth-tongued hypocrite, who would have seduced the wife of his too credulous friend, while he affected honorable addresses to his ward — I behold him now in a light so truly despicable that I shall never again respect myself for having listened to him.

[*Exit* Lady Teazle.]

Joseph Surface. Notwithstanding all this, Sir Peter, Heaven knows —

Sir Peter. That you are a villain! and so I leave you to your conscience.

Joseph Surface. You are too rash, Sir Peter; you shall hear me. The man who shuts out conviction by refusing to —

[*Exeunt* Sir Peter *and* Surface *talking.*]

ACT V

Scene I. *The library*

[*Enter* Joseph Surface *and* Servant.]

Joseph Surface. Mr. Stanley! and why should you think I would see him? you must know he comes to ask something.

Servant. Sir, I should not have let him in, but that Mr. Rowley came to the door with him.

Joseph Surface. Pshaw! blockhead! to suppose that I should now be in a temper to receive visits from poor relations! — Well, why don't you show the fellow up?

Servant. I will, sir. — Why, sir, it was not my fault that Sir Peter discovered my lady —

Joseph Surface. Go, fool! —

[*Exit* Servant.]

Sure, Fortune never played a man of my policy such a trick before! My character with Sir Peter, my hopes with Maria, destroyed in a moment! I'm in a rare humor to listen to other people's distresses! I sha'n't be able to bestow even a benevolent sentiment on Stanley.— So! here he comes, and Rowley with him. I must try to recover myself, and put a little charity into my face, however. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter* Sir Oliver Surface *and* Rowley.]

Sir Oliver. What! does he avoid us? That was he, was it not?

Rowley. It was, sir. But I doubt you are come a little too abruptly. His nerves are so weak that the sight of a poor relation may be too much for him. I should have gone first to break it to him.

Sir Oliver. Oh, plague of his nerves! Yet this is he whom Sir Peter extols as a man of the most benevolent way of thinking!

Rowley. As to his way of thinking, I cannot pretend to decide; for, to do him justice, he appears to have as much speculative benevolence as any private gentleman in the kingdom, though he is seldom so sensual as to indulge himself in the exercise of it.

Sir Oliver. Yet he has a string of charitable sentiments at his fingers' ends.

Rowley. Or, rather, at his tongue's end, Sir Oliver; for I believe there is no sentiment he has such faith in as that "Charity begins at home."

Sir Oliver. And his, I presume, is of that domestic sort which never stirs abroad at all.

Rowley. I doubt you'll find it so; but he's coming. I mustn't seem to interrupt you; and you know, immediately as you leave him, I come in to announce your arrival in your real character.

SIR OLIVER. True; and afterwards you'll meet me at Sir Peter's.

ROWLEY. Without losing a moment. [*Exit.*]

SIR OLIVER. I don't like the complaisance of his features.

[*Enter* JOSEPH SURFACE.]

JOSEPH SURFACE. Sir, I beg you ten thousand pardons for keeping you a moment waiting. — Mr. Stanley, I presume.

SIR OLIVER. At your service.

JOSEPH SURFACE. Sir, I beg you will do me the honor to sit down — I entreat you, sir.

SIR OLIVER. Dear sir — there's no occasion. — [*Aside*] Too civil by half!

JOSEPH SURFACE. I have not the pleasure of knowing you, Mr. Stanley; but I am extremely happy to see you look so well. You were nearly related to my mother, I think, Mr. Stanley?

SIR OLIVER. I was, sir; so nearly that my present poverty, I fear, may do discredit to her wealthy children, else I should not have presumed to trouble you.

JOSEPH SURFACE. Dear sir, there needs no apology; — he that is in distress, though a stranger, has a right to claim kindred with the wealthy. I am sure I wish I was of that class, and had it in my power to offer you even a small relief.

SIR OLIVER. If your uncle, Sir Oliver, were here, I should have a friend.

JOSEPH SURFACE. I wish he was, sir, with all my heart; you should not want an advocate with him, believe me, sir.

SIR OLIVER. I should not need one — my distresses would recommend me. But I imagined his bounty would enable you to become the agent of his charity.

JOSEPH SURFACE. My dear sir, you were strangely misinformed. Sir Oliver is a worthy man, a very worthy man; but avarice, Mr. Stanley, is the vice of age. I will tell you, my good

sir, in confidence, what he has done for me has been a mere nothing; though people, I know, have thought otherwise, and for my part I never chose to contradict the report.

SIR OLIVER. What! has he never transmitted you bullion — rupees — pagodas?[1]

JOSEPH SURFACE. Oh, dear sir, nothing of the kind. No, no; a few presents now and then — china, shawls, congo tea, avadavats,[2] and Indian crackers[3] — little more, believe me.

SIR OLIVER. [*Aside*] Here's gratitude for twelve thousand pounds! — Avadavats and Indian crackers!

JOSEPH SURFACE. Then, my dear sir, you have heard, I doubt not, of the extravagance of my brother; there are very few would credit what I have done for that unfortunate young man.

SIR OLIVER. [*Aside*] Not I, for one!

JOSEPH SURFACE. The sums I have lent him! Indeed I have been exceedingly to blame; it was an amiable weakness; however, I don't pretend to defend it — and now I feel it doubly culpable, since it has deprived me of the pleasure of serving you, Mr. Stanley, as my heart dictates.

SIR OLIVER. [*Aside*] Dissembler! — [*Aloud*] Then, sir, you can't assist me?

JOSEPH SURFACE. At present, it grieves me to say, I cannot; but, whenever I have the ability, you may depend upon hearing from me.

SIR OLIVER. I am extremely sorry —

JOSEPH SURFACE. Not more than I, believe me; to pity, without the power to relieve, is still more painful than to ask and be denied.

SIR OLIVER. Kind sir, your most obedient humble servant.

JOSEPH SURFACE. You leave me deeply affected, Mr. Stanley. — William, be ready to open the door.

SIR OLIVER. Oh, dear sir, no ceremony.

JOSEPH SURFACE. Your very obedient.

SIR OLIVER. Sir, your most obsequious.

[1] Indian coins. [2] Indian song birds. [3] firecrackers.

JOSEPH SURFACE. You may depend upon hearing from me, whenever I can be of service.

SIR OLIVER. Sweet sir, you are too good!

JOSEPH SURFACE. In the meantime I wish you health and spirits.

SIR OLIVER. Your ever grateful and perpetual humble servant.

JOSEPH SURFACE. Sir, yours as sincerely.

SIR OLIVER. [*Aside*] Charles, you are my heir. [*Exit.*]

JOSEPH SURFACE. This is one bad effect of a good character: it invites application from the unfortunate, and there needs no small degree of address to gain the reputation of benevolence without incurring the expense. The silver ore of pure charity is an expensive article in the catalogue of a man's good qualities, whereas the sentimental French plate I use instead of it makes just as good a show, and pays no tax.

[*Enter* ROWLEY.]

ROWLEY. Mr. Surface, your servant; I was apprehensive of interrupting you, though my business demands immediate attention, as this note will inform you.

JOSEPH SURFACE. Always happy to see Mr. Rowley.—[*Reads the letter.*] Sir Oliver Surface!—My uncle arrived!

ROWLEY. He is, indeed; we have just parted — quite well, after a speedy voyage, and impatient to embrace his worthy nephew.

JOSEPH SURFACE. I am astonished!—William, stop Mr. Stanley, if he's not gone.

ROWLEY. Oh! he's out of reach, I believe.

JOSEPH SURFACE. Why did you not let me know this when you came in together?

ROWLEY. I thought you had particular business. But I must be gone to inform your brother, and appoint him here to meet your uncle. He will be with you in a quarter of an hour.

JOSEPH SURFACE. So he says. Well, I am strangely overjoyed at his coming. — [*Aside*] Never, to be sure, was anything so damned unlucky!

ROWLEY. You will be delighted to see how well he looks.

JOSEPH SURFACE. Ah! I'm overjoyed to hear it. — [*Aside*] Just at this time!

ROWLEY. I'll tell him how impatiently you expect him.

JOSEPH SURFACE. Do, do; pray give my best duty and affection. Indeed, I cannot express the sensations I feel at the thought of seeing him. —

[*Exit* ROWLEY.]

Certainly his coming just at this time is the cruelest piece of ill fortune. [*Exit.*]

SCENE II. SIR PETER TEAZLE'S

[*Enter* MRS. CANDOUR *and* Maid.]

MAID. Indeed, ma'am, my lady will see nobody at present.

MRS. CANDOUR. Did you tell her it was her friend Mrs. Candour?

MAID. Yes, ma'am; but she begs you will excuse her.

MRS. CANDOUR. Do go again; I shall be glad to see her, if it be only for a moment, for I am sure she must be in great distress. —

[*Exit* Maid.]

Dear heart, how provoking! I'm not mistress of half the circumstances! We shall have the whole affair in the newspapers, with the names of the parties at length, before I have dropped the story at a dozen houses.

[*Enter* SIR BENJAMIN BACKBITE.]

Oh, dear Sir Benjamin! you have heard, I suppose —

SIR BENJAMIN. Of Lady Teazle and Mr. Surface —

MRS. CANDOUR. And Sir Peter's discovery —

SIR BENJAMIN. Oh, the strangest piece of business, to be sure!

MRS. CANDOUR. Well, I never was so surprised in my life. I am so sorry for all parties, indeed.

SIR BENJAMIN. Now, I don't pity Sir Peter at all; he was so extravagantly partial to Mr. Surface.

MRS. CANDOUR. Mr. Surface! Why, 'twas with Charles Lady Teazle was detected.

SIR BENJAMIN. No, no, I tell you; Mr. Surface is the gallant.

MRS. CANDOUR. No such thing! Charles is the man. 'Twas Mr. Surface brought Sir Peter on purpose to discover them.

SIR BENJAMIN. I tell you I had it from one —

MRS. CANDOUR. And I have it from one —

SIR BENJAMIN. Who had it from one, who had it —

MRS. CANDOUR. From one immediately — but here comes Lady Sneerwell; perhaps she knows the whole affair.

[*Enter* LADY SNEERWELL.]

LADY SNEERWELL. So, my dear Mrs. Candour, here's a sad affair of our friend Lady Teazle!

MRS. CANDOUR. Aye, my dear friend, who would have thought —

LADY SNEERWELL. Well, there is no trusting appearances; though, indeed, she was always too lively for me.

MRS. CANDOUR. To be sure, her manners were a little too free; but then she was so young!

LADY SNEERWELL. And had, indeed, some good qualities.

MRS. CANDOUR. So she had, indeed. But have you heard the particulars?

LADY SNEERWELL. No; but everybody says that Mr. Surface —

SIR BENJAMIN. Aye, there; I told you Mr. Surface was the man.

MRS. CANDOUR. No, no; indeed the assignation was with Charles.

LADY SNEERWELL. With Charles! You alarm me, Mrs. Candour!

MRS. CANDOUR. Yes, yes; he was the lover. Mr. Surface, to do him justice, was only the informer.

SIR BENJAMIN. Well, I'll not dispute with you, Mrs. Candour; but, be it which it may, I hope that Sir Peter's wound will not —

MRS. CANDOUR. Sir Peter's wound! Oh, mercy! I didn't hear a word of their fighting.

LADY SNEERWELL. Nor I, a syllable.

SIR BENJAMIN. No! what, no mention of the duel?

MRS. CANDOUR. Not a word.

SIR BENJAMIN. Oh, yes; they fought before they left the room.

LADY SNEERWELL. Pray, let us hear.

MRS. CANDOUR. Aye, do oblige us with the duel.

SIR BENJAMIN. "Sir," says Sir Peter, immediately after the discovery, "you are a most ungrateful fellow."

MRS. CANDOUR. Aye, to Charles —

SIR BENJAMIN. No, no — to Mr. Surface — "a most ungrateful fellow; and old as I am, sir," says he, "I insist on immediate satisfaction."

MRS. CANDOUR. Aye, that must have been to Charles; for 'tis very unlikely Mr. Surface should fight in his own house.

SIR BENJAMIN. Gad's life, ma'am, not at all — "giving me immediate satisfaction." — On this, ma'am, Lady Teazle, seeing Sir Peter in such danger, ran out of the room in strong hysterics, and Charles after her, calling out for hartshorn and water; then, madam, they began to fight with swords —

[*Enter* CRABTREE.]

CRABTREE. With pistols, nephew, pistols! I have it from undoubted authority.

MRS. CANDOUR. Oh, Mr. Crabtree, then it is all true!

CRABTREE. Too true, indeed, madam, and Sir Peter is dangerously wounded —

Sir Benjamin. By a thrust in second[1] quite through his left side —

Crabtree. By a bullet lodged in the thorax.

Mrs. Candour. Mercy on me! Poor Sir Peter.

Crabtree. Yes, madam; though Charles would have avoided the matter if he could.

Mrs. Candour. I knew Charles was the person.

Sir Benjamin. My uncle, I see, knows nothing of the matter.

Crabtree. But Sir Peter taxed him with the basest ingratitude.

Sir Benjamin. That I told you, you know —

Crabtree. Do, nephew, let me speak! — and insisted on immediate —

Sir Benjamin. Just as I said —

Crabtree. Odds life, nephew, allow others to know something too! A pair of pistols lay on the bureau (for Mr. Surface, it seems, had come home the night before late from Salthill,[2] where he had been to see the Montem with a friend, who has a son at Eton), so, unluckily, the pistols were left charged.

Sir Benjamin. I heard nothing of this.

Crabtree. Sir Peter forced Charles to take one, and they fired, it seems, pretty nearly together. Charles's shot took effect, as I tell you, and Sir Peter's missed; but, what is very extraordinary, the ball struck against a little bronze Shakespeare that stood over the fireplace, grazed out of the window at a right angle, and wounded the postman, who was just coming to the door with a double letter from Northamptonshire.

Sir Benjamin. My uncle's account is more circumstantial, I confess; but I believe mine is the true one, for all that.

[1] A downward parrying stroke to left as opponent lunges.

[2] Where Eton schoolboys, once every three years, exacted fees from passers-by to defray university expenses of their senior scholar or school captain. (This ceremony, the "Montem," was stopped in 1847.)

LADY SNEERWELL. [*Aside*] I am more interested in this affair than they imagine, and must have better information. [*Exit.*]

SIR BENJAMIN. Ah! Lady Sneerwell's alarm is very easily accounted for.

CRABTREE. Yes, yes, they certainly do say — but that's neither here nor there.

MRS. CANDOUR. But, pray, where is Sir Peter at present?

CRABTREE. Oh! they brought him home, and he is now in the house, though the servants are ordered to deny him.

MRS. CANDOUR. I believe so, and Lady Teazle, I suppose, attending him.

CRABTREE. Yes, yes; and I saw one of the faculty[1] enter just before me.

SIR BENJAMIN. Hey! who comes here?

CRABTREE. Oh, this is he: the physician, depend on't.

MRS. CANDOUR. Oh, certainly! it must be the physician; and now we shall know.

[*Enter* SIR OLIVER SURFACE.]

CRABTREE. Well, doctor, what hopes?

MRS. CANDOUR. Aye, doctor, how's your patient?

SIR BENJAMIN. Now, doctor, isn't it a wound with a small-sword?

CRABTREE. A bullet lodged in the thorax, for a hundred!

SIR OLIVER. Doctor! a wound with a small-sword! and a bullet in the thorax! — Oons! are you mad, good people?

SIR BENJAMIN. Perhaps, sir, you are not a doctor?

SIR OLIVER. Truly, I am to thank you for my degree, if I am.

CRABTREE. Only a friend of Sir Peter's, then, I presume. But, sir, you must have heard of his accident?

SIR OLIVER. Not a word!

CRABTREE. Not of his being dangerously wounded?

SIR OLIVER. The devil he is!

[1] the medical profession.

SIR BENJAMIN. Run through the body —

CRABTREE. Shot in the breast —

SIR BENJAMIN. By one Mr. Surface —

CRABTREE. Aye, the younger.

SIR OLIVER. Hey! what the plague! you seem to differ strangely in your accounts; however, you agree that Sir Peter is dangerously wounded.

SIR BENJAMIN. Oh, yes, we agree there.

CRABTREE. Yes, yes, I believe there can be no doubt of that.

SIR OLIVER. Then, upon my word, for a person in that situation, he is the most imprudent man alive; for here he comes, walking as if nothing at all was the matter.

[*Enter* SIR PETER TEAZLE.]

Odds heart, Sir Peter! you are come in good time, I promise you; for we had just given you over!

SIR BENJAMIN. Egad, uncle, this is the most sudden recovery!

SIR OLIVER. Why, man! what do you out of bed with a small-sword through your body, and a bullet lodged in your thorax?

SIR PETER. A small-sword and a bullet!

SIR OLIVER. Aye; these gentlemen would have killed you without law or physic, and wanted to dub me a doctor, to make me an accomplice.

SIR PETER. Why, what is all this?

SIR BENJAMIN. We rejoice, Sir Peter, that the story of the duel is not true, and are sincerely sorry for your other misfortune.

SIR PETER. [*Aside*] So, so; all over the town already!

CRABTREE. Though, Sir Peter, you were certainly vastly to blame to marry at your years.

SIR PETER. Sir, what business is that of yours?

MRS. CANDOUR. Though, indeed, as Sir Peter made so good a husband, he's very much to be pitied.

SIR PETER. Plague on your pity, ma'am! I desire none of it.

Sir Benjamin. However, Sir Peter, you must not mind the laughing and jests you will meet with on the occasion.

Sir Peter. Sir, sir! I desire to be master in my own house.

Crabtree. 'Tis no uncommon case, that's one comfort.

Sir Peter. I insist on being left to myself; without ceremony, I insist on your leaving my house directly!

Mrs. Candour. Well, well, we are going; and depend on't, we'll make the best report of it we can. [*Exit.*]

Sir Peter. Leave my house!

Crabtree. And tell how hardly you've been treated. [*Exit.*]

Sir Peter. Leave my house!

Sir Benjamin. And how patiently you bear it. [*Exit.*]

Sir Peter. Fiends! vipers! furies! Oh! that their own venom would choke them!

Sir Oliver. They were very provoking indeed, Sir Peter.

[*Enter* Rowley.]

Rowley. I heard high words; what has ruffled you, sir?

Sir Peter. Pshaw! what signifies asking? Do I ever pass a day without my vexations?

Rowley. Well, I'm not inquisitive.

Sir Oliver. Well, Sir Peter, I have seen both my nephews in the manner we proposed.

Sir Peter. A precious couple they are!

Rowley. Yes, and Sir Oliver is convinced that your judgment was right, Sir Peter.

Sir Oliver. Yes, I find Joseph is indeed the man, after all.

Rowley. Aye, as Sir Peter says, he is a man of sentiment.

Sir Oliver. And acts up to the sentiments he professes.

Rowley. It certainly is edification to hear him talk.

Sir Oliver. Oh, he's a model for the young men of the age!—but how's this, Sir Peter? you don't join us in your friend Joseph's praise, as I expected.

Sir Peter. Sir Oliver, we live in a damned wicked world, and the fewer we praise the better.

Rowley. What! do you say so, Sir Peter, who were never mistaken in your life?

Sir Peter. Pshaw! plague on you both! I see by your sneering you have heard the whole affair. I shall go mad among you!

Rowley. Then, to fret you no longer, Sir Peter, we are indeed acquainted with it all. I met Lady Teazle coming from Mr. Surface's so humbled that she deigned to request me to be her advocate with you.

Sir Peter. And does Sir Oliver know all this?

Sir Oliver. Every circumstance.

Sir Peter. What, of the closet and the screen, hey?

Sir Oliver. Yes, yes, and the little French milliner. Oh, I have been vastly diverted with the story! ha! ha! ha!

Sir Peter. 'Twas very pleasant.

Sir Oliver. I never laughed more in my life, I assure you; ha! ha! ha!

Sir Peter. Oh, vastly diverting! ha! ha! ha!

Rowley. To be sure, Joseph with his sentiments! ha! ha! ha!

Sir Peter. Yes, yes, his sentiments! ha! ha! ha! Hypocritical villain!

Sir Oliver. Aye, and that rogue Charles to pull Sir Peter out of the closet; ha! ha! ha!

Sir Peter. Ha! ha! 'twas devilish entertaining, to be sure!

Sir Oliver. Ha! ha! ha! Egad, Sir Peter, I should like to have seen your face when the screen was thrown down; ha! ha!

Sir Peter. Yes, yes, my face when the screen was thrown down; ha! ha! ha! Oh, I must never show my head again!

Sir Oliver. But come, come, it isn't fair to laugh at you neither, my old friend; though, upon my soul, I can't help it.

Sir Peter. Oh, pray don't restrain your mirth on my ac-

count; it does not hurt me at all! I laugh at the whole affair myself. Yes, yes, I think being a standing jest for all one's acquaintance a very happy situation. Oh, yes, and then of a morning to read the paragraphs about Mr. S—, Lady T—, and Sir P— will be so entertaining!

ROWLEY. Without affectation, Sir Peter, you may despise the ridicule of fools. But I see Lady Teazle going toward the next room; I am sure you must desire a reconciliation as earnestly as she does.

SIR OLIVER. Perhaps my being here prevents her coming to you. Well, I'll leave honest Rowley to mediate between you; but he must bring you all presently to Mr. Surface's, where I am now returning, if not to reclaim a libertine, at least to expose hypocrisy.

SIR PETER. Ah, I'll be present at your discovering yourself there with all my heart, though 'tis a vile unlucky place for discoveries.

ROWLEY. We'll follow.

[*Exit* SIR OLIVER.]

SIR PETER. She is not coming here, you see, Rowley.

ROWLEY. No, but she has left the door of that room open, you perceive. See, she is in tears.

SIR PETER. Certainly a little mortification appears very becoming in a wife. Don't you think it will do her good to let her pine a little?

ROWLEY. Oh, this is ungenerous in you!

SIR PETER. Well, I know not what to think. You remember the letter I found of hers evidently intended for Charles?

ROWLEY. A mere forgery, Sir Peter! laid in your way on purpose. This is one of the points which I intend Snake shall give you conviction of.

SIR PETER. I wish I were once satisfied of that. She looks this way. What a remarkably elegant turn of the head she has! Rowley, I'll go to her.

ROWLEY. Certainly.

SIR PETER. Though when it is known that we are reconciled, people will laugh at me ten times more.

ROWLEY. Let them laugh, and retort their malice only by showing them you are happy in spite of it.

SIR PETER. I'faith, so I will! and, if I'm not mistaken, we may yet be the happiest couple in the country.

ROWLEY. Nay, Sir Peter, he who once lays aside suspicion —

SIR PETER. Hold, Master Rowley! if you have any regard for me, never let me hear you utter anything like a sentiment; I have had enough of them to serve me the rest of my life.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. *The library in* JOSEPH SURFACE'S *house*

[*Enter* JOSEPH SURFACE *and* LADY SNEERWELL.]

LADY SNEERWELL. Impossible! Will not Sir Peter immediately be reconciled to Charles, and of course no longer oppose his union with Maria? The thought is distraction to me.

JOSEPH SURFACE. Can passion furnish a remedy?

LADY SNEERWELL. No, nor cunning either. Oh, I was a fool, an idiot, to league with such a blunderer!

JOSEPH SURFACE. Sure, Lady Sneerwell, I am the greatest sufferer; yet you see I bear the accident with calmness.

LADY SNEERWELL. Because the disappointment doesn't reach your heart; your interest only attached you to Maria. Had you felt for her what I have for that ungrateful libertine, neither your temper nor hypocrisy could prevent your showing the sharpness of your vexation.

JOSEPH SURFACE. But why should your reproaches fall on me for this disappointment?

LADY SNEERWELL. Are you not the cause of it? Had you not a sufficient field for your roguery in imposing upon Sir Peter, and supplanting your brother, but you must endeavor to seduce his wife? I hate such an avarice of crimes; 'tis an unfair monopoly, and never prospers.

JOSEPH SURFACE. Well, I admit I have been to blame. I confess I deviated from the direct road of wrong, but I don't think we're so totally defeated neither.

LADY SNEERWELL. No!

JOSEPH SURFACE. You tell me you have made a trial of Snake since we met, and that you still believe him faithful to us?

LADY SNEERWELL. I do believe so.

JOSEPH SURFACE. And that he has undertaken, should it be necessary, to swear and prove that Charles is at this time contracted by vows and honor to your ladyship, which some of his former letters to you will serve to support?

LADY SNEERWELL. This, indeed, might have assisted.

JOSEPH SURFACE. Come, come; it is not too late yet. — [*Knocking at the door*] But hark! this is probably my uncle, Sir Oliver. Retire to that room; we'll consult farther when he is gone.

LADY SNEERWELL. Well, but if *he* should find you out too?

JOSEPH SURFACE. Oh, I have no fear of that. Sir Peter will hold his tongue for his own credit's sake — and you may depend on it I shall soon discover Sir Oliver's weak side!

LADY SNEERWELL. I have no diffidence of your abilities; only be constant to one roguery at a time.

JOSEPH SURFACE. I will, I will! —

[*Exit* LADY SNEERWELL.]

So! 'tis confounded hard, after such bad fortune, to be baited by one's confederate in evil. Well, at all events, my character is so much better than Charles's that I certainly — hey! — what — this is not Sir Oliver, but old Stanley again. Plague on't that he should return to tease me just now! I shall have Sir Oliver come and find him here — and —

[*Enter* SIR OLIVER SURFACE.]

Gad's life, Mr. Stanley, why have you come back to plague me at this time? You must not stay now, upon my word.

Sir Oliver. Sir, I hear your uncle Oliver is expected here; and though he has been so penurious to you, I'll try what he'll do for me.

Joseph Surface. Sir, 'tis impossible for you to stay now, so I must beg — Come any other time, and I promise you, you shall be assisted.

Sir Oliver. No; Sir Oliver and I must be acquainted.

Joseph Surface. Zounds, sir! then I insist on your quitting the room directly.

Sir Oliver. Nay, sir —

Joseph Surface. Sir, I insist on't! — Here, William! show this gentleman out. Since you compel me, sir, not one moment — this is such insolence. [*Going to push him out*]

[*Enter* Charles Surface.]

Charles Surface. Heyday! what's the matter now? What the devil, have you got hold of my little broker here? Zounds, brother, don't hurt little Premium. What's the matter, my little fellow?

Joseph Surface. So! he has been with you too, has he?

Charles Surface. To be sure, he has. Why, he's as honest a little — But sure, Joseph, you have not been borrowing money too, have you?

Joseph Surface. Borrowing! no! But, brother, you know we expect Sir Oliver here every —

Charles Surface. O Gad, that's true! Noll mustn't find the little broker here, to be sure.

Joseph Surface. Yet Mr. Stanley insists —

Charles Surface. Stanley! why, his name's Premium.

Joseph Surface. No, sir, Stanley.

Charles Surface. No, no, Premium.

Joseph Surface. Well, no matter which — but —

Charles Surface. Aye, aye, Stanley or Premium, 'tis the

same thing, as you say; for I suppose he goes by half a hundred names, besides A. B. at the coffeehouse.[1]

[*Knocking*]

JOSEPH SURFACE. 'Sdeath! here's Sir Oliver at the door. — Now, I beg, Mr. Stanley —

CHARLES SURFACE. Aye, aye, and I beg, Mr. Premium —

SIR OLIVER. Gentlemen —

JOSEPH SURFACE. Sir, by Heaven you shall go.

CHARLES SURFACE. Aye, out with him, certainly!

SIR OLIVER. This violence —

JOSEPH SURFACE. Sir, 'tis your own fault.

CHARLES SURFACE. Out with him, to be sure.

[*Both forcing* SIR OLIVER *out*]

[*Enter* SIR PETER *and* LADY TEAZLE, MARIA, *and* ROWLEY.]

SIR PETER. My old friend, Sir Oliver — hey! What in the name of wonder — here are dutiful nephews — assault their uncle at a first visit!

LADY TEAZLE. Indeed, Sir Oliver, 'twas well we came in to rescue you.

ROWLEY. Truly it was; for I perceive, Sir Oliver, the character of old Stanley was no protection to you.

SIR OLIVER. Nor of Premium either; the necessities of the former could not extort a shilling from that benevolent gentleman; and now, egad, I stood a chance of faring worse than my ancestors, and being knocked down without being bid for.

JOSEPH SURFACE. Charles!

CHARLES SURFACE. Joseph!

JOSEPH SURFACE. 'Tis now complete!

CHARLES SURFACE. Very.

SIR OLIVER. Sir Peter, my friend, and Rowley too — look on that elder nephew of mine. You know what he has already re-

[1] Assumed names were often used for receiving secret letters at coffeehouses.

ceived from my bounty, and you also know how gladly I would have regarded half my fortune as held in trust for him; judge then my disappointment in discovering him to be destitute of faith, charity, and gratitude!

SIR PETER. Sir Oliver, I should be more surprised at this declaration if I had not myself found him to be mean, treacherous, and hypocritical.

LADY TEAZLE. And if the gentleman pleads not guilty to these, pray let him call *me* to his character.

SIR PETER. Then, I believe, we need add no more; if he knows himself, he will consider it as the most perfect punishment that he is known to the world.

CHARLES SURFACE. [*Aside*] If they talk this way to Honesty, what will they say to me, by and by?

[SIR PETER, LADY TEAZLE, *and* MARIA *retire*.]

SIR OLIVER. As for that prodigal, his brother, there —

CHARLES SURFACE. [*Aside*] Aye, now comes my turn; the damned family pictures will ruin me!

JOSEPH SURFACE. Sir Oliver — uncle, will you honor me with a hearing?

CHARLES SURFACE. [*Aside*] Now, if Joseph would make one of his long speeches, I might recollect myself a little.

SIR OLIVER. [*To* JOSEPH] I suppose you would undertake to justify yourself?

JOSEPH SURFACE. I trust I could.

SIR OLIVER. [*To* CHARLES] Well, sir!—and you could justify yourself too, I suppose?

CHARLES SURFACE. Not that I know of, Sir Oliver.

SIR OLIVER. What!— Little Premium has been let too much into the secret, I suppose?

CHARLES SURFACE. True, sir; but they were *family* secrets, and should not be mentioned again, you know.

ROWLEY. Come, Sir Oliver, I know you cannot speak of Charles's follies with anger.

SIR OLIVER. Odds heart, no more I can; nor with gravity

either. Sir Peter, do you know the rogue bargained with me for all his ancestors; sold me judges and generals by the foot, and maiden aunts as cheap as broken china.

CHARLES SURFACE. To be sure, Sir Oliver, I did make a little free with the family canvas, that's the truth on't. My ancestors may rise in judgment against me, there's no denying it; but believe me sincere when I tell you — and upon my soul I would not say so if I was not — that if I do not appear mortified at the exposure of my follies, it is because I feel at this moment the warmest satisfaction in seeing you, my liberal benefactor.

SIR OLIVER. Charles, I believe you. Give me your hand again; the ill-looking little fellow over the settee has made your peace.

CHARLES SURFACE. Then, sir, my gratitude to the original is still increased.

LADY TEAZLE. Yet, I believe, Sir Oliver, here is one whom Charles is still more anxious to be reconciled to.

[*Pointing to* MARIA]

SIR OLIVER. Oh, I have heard of his attachment there; and, with the young lady's pardon, if I construe right — that blush —

SIR PETER. Well, child, speak your sentiments!

MARIA. Sir, I have little to say, but that I shall rejoice to hear that he is happy; for me, whatever claim I had to his affection, I willingly resign to one who has a better title.

CHARLES SURFACE. How, Maria!

SIR PETER. Heyday! what's the mystery now? While he appeared an incorrigible rake, you would give your hand to no one else; and now that he is likely to reform, I'll warrant you won't have him!

MARIA. His own heart and Lady Sneerwell know the cause.

CHARLES SURFACE. Lady Sneerwell!

JOSEPH SURFACE. Brother, it is with great concern I am obliged to speak on this point, but my regard to justice compels me, and Lady Sneerwell's injuries can no longer be concealed.

[*Opens the door.*]

[*Enter* Lady Sneerwell.]

Sir Peter. So! another French milliner! Egad, he has one in every room in the house, I suppose!

Lady Sneerwell. Ungrateful Charles! Well may you be surprised, and feel for the indelicate situation your perfidy has forced me into.

Charles Surface. Pray, uncle, is this another plot of yours? For, as I have life, I don't understand it.

Joseph Surface. I believe, sir, there is but the evidence of one person more necessary to make it extremely clear.

Sir Peter. And that person, I imagine, is Mr. Snake. — Rowley, you were perfectly right to bring him with us, and pray let him appear.

Rowley. Walk in, Mr. Snake.

[*Enter* Snake.]

I thought his testimony might be wanted; however, it happens unluckily that he comes to confront Lady Sneerwell, not to support her.

Lady Sneerwell. A villain! Treacherous to me at last! Speak, fellow, have you too conspired against me?

Snake. I beg your ladyship ten thousand pardons; you paid me extremely liberally for the lie in question, but I unfortunately have been offered double to speak the truth.

Sir Peter. Plot and counterplot, egad!

Lady Sneerwell. The torments of shame and disappointment on you all. [*Going*]

Lady Teazle. Hold, Lady Sneerwell — before you go, let me thank you for the trouble you and that gentleman have taken, in writing letters from me to Charles, and answering them yourself; and let me also request you to make my respects to the scandalous college, of which you are president, and inform them that Lady Teazle, licentiate,[1] begs leave to return the

[1] A graduate, or one who is licensed; here, a young physician.

diploma they granted her, as she leaves off practice, and kills characters no longer.

LADY SNEERWELL. You too, madam! — provoking — insolent! May your husband live these fifty years! [*Exit.*]

SIR PETER. Oons! what a fury!

LADY TEAZLE. A malicious creature, indeed!

SIR PETER. Hey! not for her last wish?

LADY TEAZLE. Oh, no!

SIR OLIVER. Well, sir, and what have you to say now?

JOSEPH SURFACE. Sir, I am so confounded to find that Lady Sneerwell could be guilty of suborning Mr. Snake in this manner, to impose on us all, that I know not what to say; however, lest her revengeful spirit should prompt her to injure my brother, I had certainly better follow her directly. [*Exit.*]

SIR PETER. Moral to the last!

SIR OLIVER. Aye, and marry her, Joseph, if you can. Oil and vinegar, egad! you'll do very well together.

ROWLEY. I believe we have no more occasion for Mr. Snake at present?

SNAKE. Before I go, I beg pardon, once for all, for whatever uneasiness I have been the humble instrument of causing to the parties present.

SIR PETER. Well, well, you have made atonement by a good deed at last.

SNAKE. But I must request of the company that it shall never be known.

SIR PETER. Hey! what the plague! are you ashamed of having done a right thing once in your life?

SNAKE. Ah, sir, consider — I live by the badness of my character; I have nothing but my infamy to depend on! and if it were once known that I had been betrayed into an honest action, I should lose every friend I have in the world.

SIR OLIVER. Well, well — we'll not traduce you by saying anything in your praise, never fear.

[*Exit* SNAKE.]

SIR PETER. There's a precious rogue!

LADY TEAZLE. See, Sir Oliver, there needs no persuasion now to reconcile your nephew and Maria.

SIR OLIVER. Aye, aye, that's as it should be, and, egad, we'll have the wedding to-morrow morning.

CHARLES SURFACE. Thank you, dear uncle.

SIR PETER. What, you rogue! don't you ask the girl's consent first?

CHARLES SURFACE. Oh, I have done that a long time — a minute ago — and she has looked "yes."

MARIA. For shame, Charles! — I protest, Sir Peter, there has not been a word —

SIR OLIVER. Well, then, the fewer the better; may your love for each other never know abatement.

SIR PETER. And may you live as happily together as Lady Teazle and I intend to do!

CHARLES SURFACE. Rowley, my old friend, I am sure you congratulate me; and I suspect that I owe you much.

SIR OLIVER. You do, indeed, Charles.

ROWLEY. If my efforts to serve you had not succeeded, you would have been in my debt for the attempt; but deserve to be happy, and you overpay me.

SIR PETER. Aye, honest Rowley always said you would reform.

CHARLES SURFACE. Why, as to reforming, Sir Peter, I'll make no promises, and that I take to be a proof that I intend to set about it. But here shall be my monitor — my gentle guide. — Ah! can I leave the virtuous path those eyes illumine?

Though thou, dear maid, shouldst waive thy beauty's sway,
Thou still must rule, because I will obey;
An humble fugitive from Folly, view;
No sanctuary near but Love and you:

[*To the audience*]

You can, indeed, each anxious fear remove,
For even Scandal dies, if you approve.

EPILOGUE

By Mr. Colman[1]

Spoken by Lady Teazle

I, who was late so volatile and gay,
Like a trade wind must now blow all one way,
Bend all my cares, my studies, and my vows,
To one dull rusty weathercock — my spouse!
So wills our virtuous bard — the motley Bayes[2]
Of crying epilogues and laughing plays!
Old bachelors, who marry smart young wives,
Learn from our play to regulate your lives:
Each bring his dear to town, all faults upon her —
London will prove the very source of honor.
Plunged fairly in, like a cold bath it serves,
When principles relax, to brace the nerves.
Such is my case; and yet I must deplore
That the gay dream of dissipation's o'er.
And say, ye fair! was ever lively wife,
Born with a genius for the highest life,
Like me untimely blasted in her bloom,
Like me condemn'd to such a dismal doom?
Save money — when I just knew how to waste it!
Leave London — just as I began to taste it!
Must I then watch the early crowing cock,
The melancholy ticking of a clock,
In a lone rustic hall forever pounded,
With dogs, cats, rats, and squalling brats surrounded?
With humble curate can I now retire
(While good Sir Peter boozes with the squire),
And at backgammon mortify my soul,

[1] The elder George Colman, dramatist, and manager of the Haymarket Theatre; he had produced "She Stoops to Conquer" at Covent Garden.

[2] The dramatist, as in many epilogues.

That pants for loo,[1] or flutters at a vole[2]?
"Seven's the main!"[3] Dear sound that must expire,
Lost at hot cockles[4] round a Christmas fire!
The transient hour of fashion too soon spent,
Farewell the tranquil mind,[5] farewell content!
Farewell the plumèd head, the cushion'd *tête*,
That takes the cushion from its proper seat!
That spirit-stirring drum! — card drums[6] I mean,
Spadille — odd trick — pam — basto — king and queen![7]
And you, ye knockers, that, with brazen throat,
The welcome visitors' approach denote;
Farewell all quality of high renown,
Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious town!
Farewell! your revels I partake no more,
And Lady Teazle's occupation's o'er!
All this I told our bard; he smiled, and said 'twas clear,
I ought to play deep tragedy next year.
Meanwhile he drew wise morals from his play,
And in these solemn periods stalk'd away:
"Blessed were the fair like you; her faults who stopped
And closed her follies when the curtain dropped!
No more in vice or error to engage,
Or play the fool at large on life's great stage."

[1] A game of cards.

[2] A sweep, or the taking of all the tricks.

[3] A throw of the dice.

[4] An old game in which a blindfolded player is struck by others and tries to guess their names.

[5] The eleven lines following are a parody of Othello's farewell to his occupation ("Othello," III, iii, 348–357).

[6] card parties.

[7] Cards in the game of omber, where spadille was the ace of spades, pam the jack of clubs, and basto the ace of clubs.

THE PROBLEM PLAY

LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN, BY OSCAR WILDE (1856–1900)

During the first ten years of the contemporary period in English drama one of the outstanding developments was that of the problem plays. In these the strict conventions of mid-nineteenth century French drama were given a new direction and a new significance by the discussion of social problems, as in Ibsen.

These problem plays, dealing chiefly with unhappy sex relationships, have been ridiculed at times by later writers, nowhere more effectively than in Barrie's "Alice Sit-by-the-Fire," in the breathless earnestness of the two young girls who have learned to know life by attending matinée performances at popular theaters. Still, the treatment of such a theme was in itself a declaration of liberty for English drama in the last decade of the nineteenth century, and it prepared the way for the infinitely greater variety of later and more significant plays. The earlier problem play reached its most characteristic expression in the hands of Pinero and Jones, but was largely supplanted by plays of social discussion or propaganda written by Shaw and Galsworthy.

"Lady Windermere's Fan" (1892) is in some ways the earliest of the problem plays. It was the first prose play for more than a century which won success in the theater and at the same time had marked literary merit. It had to the full the ability to please in print that has been an important feature of contemporary drama. Although the plot is the hackneyed one of an erring mother and a wife's compromising visit to a room at midnight,

there is in the play an appearance of humanity toward women quite unlike the traditional Victorian attitude. Wilde succeeds much better than his predecessors in adapting the French type of play to the English stage, and "Lady Windermere's Fan" is as far above the older English melodrama in its literary quality as it is below the best work of Shaw and Galsworthy in intellectual power.

In addition, the play marks a return to the eighteenth-century comedy of manners. For the first time since Congreve and Sheridan, Wilde gave the stage a play with the wit and the finesse of high comedy. To many critics this is the principal feature of the play; certainly its appeal will outlast that of the conventional plot. In the actual structure of the play, however, Wilde has used the comedy-of-manners element as a background for the story, much as Sheridan used the scandal scenes in his greatest play. Of the principal characters the Windermeres do not indulge in the witty play of words, and Mrs. Erlynne relies upon her raillery only to secure her ends and to conceal her personal tragedy. Correspondingly, the characters who are most seriously presented are least interesting; according to Walkley, "the husband and wife . . . are mere mechanical dolls, who are none the more human for behaving like lunatics."

Born of Irish parentage in Dublin, Wilde made a brilliant record in classical studies at Trinity College, Dublin, and at Magdalen College, Oxford. He identified himself with the æsthetic movement of the time; and although himself a young disciple and imitator of wiser men, such as Pater, Ruskin, Whistler, and others, he allowed himself to be spoken of as a leader, and he exploited the notoriety which he won by his eccentricities of manner. For a time he wore long hair, knee breeches, silk stockings, and green carnations, making himself the butt of cartoons in *Punch* and of the Gilbert-Sullivan opera "Patience." After a lecture tour in America and a period of residence in Paris he returned to London to write for a living. His earlier reputation was made by his conversation, but his wider popularity and

unusual financial returns did not come to him until the success of "Lady Windermere's Fan" (1892). He then devoted himself to the stage until his imprisonment in 1895. After two years of confinement with hard labor he was discharged, living abroad until his death in Paris, in 1900. His one great poem, "The Ballad of Reading Gaol," was written after his imprisonment; but he produced little else of value, and died in obscurity.

His faults were moral weakness and an indifference to the daily concerns of men; his strength was in his wit and his literary style. He is perhaps the extreme example in English literature of the separation of morality and art, which had been advocated by Edgar Allan Poe, but which had been vigorously attacked a century before Poe's time by Samuel Johnson, whose life of his friend Richard Savage concludes with a reminder to

> those who, in confidence of superior capacities or attainments, disregard the common maxims of life, . . . that nothing will supply the want of prudence; and that negligence and irregularity, long continued, will make knowledge useless, wit ridiculous, and genius contemptible.

If Wilde had lived during the Restoration era, his personal weaknesses would have been condoned, the triteness of his plots would have mattered little, and his skill in dialogue would have fitted him to hold high rank among the masters of the comedy of manners. In his own age his uncommon power in adaptation of current ideas and forms and his gift for style enabled him to become an early exponent of the problem play as well as of the sensuous Oriental play ("Salomé"), and to revive the old traditions of literary drama and of the high comedy of manners.

When "Lady Windermere's Fan" was first printed, it was still customary to give only the abbreviated stage directions which were in general use in the actors' prompt copies, not the elaborated stage directions for the reader which have been developed by Barrie or by Shaw. *R.* and *L.* are the right and left sides of the stage as seen by the actor (corresponding to the

left and right sides of the audience). *C.* is the center of the stage; *R.C.* and *L.C.* are right center and left center. *Up* is up stage, toward the back; *Down* is toward the audience. *1 R.E.* is the entrance on the actor's right nearest the audience; *2 R.E.* is the second entrance on the right away from the audience; and so on. A *Cross* from one side of the stage to the other is repeatedly called for, not only to produce another grouping of characters on the stage, but also to emphasize a character or a bit of dialogue.

As the play was first acted, Wilde attempted to keep the identity of Mrs. Erlynne secret until the last act; but after a few nights he changed this. The names of the principal characters are taken from towns in northern England and southern Scotland. Wilde told Harris:

> That's how I get all the names of my personages. . . . I take up a map of the English counties, and there they are. Our English villages have often exquisitely beautiful names. Windermere, for instance . . .

It has been said that Wilde does not excel in portraying the characters of women; Lady Windermere is a lay figure, Mrs. Erlynne a conventional woman with a past, the Duchess of Berwick a comical gossip with a fondness for worldly moralizing. Still, the scenes between Mrs. Erlynne and Lady Windermere are well managed and very effective for their purpose. Wilde is not greatly interested in the people of his plays; only the dexterity of his wit and the ease of his dramatic management keep them in motion. It is characteristic of him that his most original character is the nonexistent Bunbury in "The Importance of Being Earnest" (1895).

The richest man in the play, Mr. Hopper, is an Australian, much as the richest man in "The School for Scandal" was an Englishman returned from long residence in India. The nabob was the favorite character as a rich uncle in the latter part of the eighteenth century. In the latter part of the nineteenth century the Australian was expected to be equally rich and

equally opportune in his arrival, and usually he was expected to be rough of manners and strong of will. In the twentieth century there has been a tendency to expect Americans and Canadians to fill the traditional rôle of the older nabobs and Australians of the English stage.

Wilde had no objection to repeating himself, especially in his jokes. The best of them are repeated from his conversation to his books, or from his early works to his later ones, often with great improvement in the phrasing. His commonest forms of wit are the paradox (a statement which seems self-contradictory) and popular phrases turned backward or upside down. One of the best examples of this wit by contradictions is found in Lord Darlington's speech, "I can resist everything except temptation." At other times the wit is dependent upon a pun or a contrast of words, or upon a sharply presented idea: "The English country gentleman galloping after a fox — the unspeakable in full pursuit of the uneatable"; and "The Book of Life begins with a man and a woman in a garden; it ends with Revelations."

In "Lady Windermere's Fan" the traditional five acts have been reduced to four, each having but one scene; the places are in one section of London, and the changes are slight; and the total lapse of time is less than twenty-four hours. The plot is simple and closely unified, although totally irrelevant characters, such as Lady Agatha and Mr. Hopper, pass in and out by way of social satire or dramatic background. The crisis in Lord Darlington's rooms rivals its model, Sheridan's screen scene.

The objection has been raised that the ending of the play is cowardly (Tatlock and Martin, "Representative English Plays," p. 806):

> One feels dissatisfaction with the ending — that Lady Windermere's folly should be huddled up from her husband, so that, instead of facing it down, she may forget it, precisely as any worldly and superficial woman in the audience would have done. The decent and satisfying ending Wilde probably rejected as too "obvious."

However, the conclusion serves to keep Lady Windermere from taking the stage from her mother. The last lines are very effective theatrically, and Mrs. Erlynne remains the striking figure that the playwright meant her to be. Wilde usually wrote his last scene first. It is probable that all the principal action was contrived to justify the final speech, which indeed often appears in a modified form as a subtitle for "Lady Windermere's Fan": "A Play about a Good Woman."

An almost opposite objection has been urged by Ransome: that the play is moral in tone for the sake of the audience; not witty and free from any teaching, as Wilde would have preferred. But this only brings us back to the statement with which we began in the Introduction — that drama is a social art. The audience of 1892 influenced Wilde to write "Lady Windermere's Fan" as a problem play, not as a pure comedy of manners.

LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN[1]

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

LORD WINDERMERE
LORD DARLINGTON
LORD AUGUSTUS LORTON
MR. CECIL GRAHAM
MR. DUMBY
MR. HOPPER
PARKER, *butler*

LADY WINDERMERE
THE DUCHESS OF BERWICK
LADY AGATHA CARLISLE
LADY PLYMDALE
LADY JEDBURGH
LADY STUTFIELD
MRS. COWPER-COWPER
MRS. ERLYNNE
ROSALIE, *maid*

THE SCENES OF THE PLAY

ACT I. *Morning-room in Lord Windermere's house*
ACT II. *Drawing-room in Lord Windermere's house*
ACT III. *Lord Darlington's rooms*
ACT IV. *Same as Act I*

TIME: *The present* PLACE: *London*

The action of the play takes place within twenty-four hours, beginning on a Tuesday afternoon at five o'clock and ending the next day at 1.30 P.M.

ACT I

SCENE. *Morning-room of* LORD WINDERMERE'S *house in Carlton House Terrace.*[2] *Doors C. and R. Bureau with books and papers R. Sofa with small tea table L. Window opening on to terrace L. Table R.*

[1] Reprinted by permission of the Executors of the Oscar Wilde Estate and of Methuen & Co., publishers.

[2] Aristocratic residential street, commanding view of St. James's Park.

LADY WINDERMERE *is at table R. arranging roses in a blue bowl.*

[*Enter* PARKER.]

PARKER. Is your ladyship at home this afternoon?

LADY WINDERMERE. Yes — who has called?

PARKER. Lord Darlington, my lady.

LADY WINDERMERE. [*Hesitates for a moment.*] Show him up and I'm at home to anyone who calls.

PARKER. Yes, my lady. [*Exit C.*]

LADY WINDERMERE. It's best for me to see him before to-night. I'm glad he's come.

[*Enter* PARKER *C.*]

PARKER. Lord Darlington.

[*Enter* LORD DARLINGTON. *Exit* PARKER.]

LORD DARLINGTON. How do you do, Lady Windermere?

LADY WINDERMERE. How do you do, Lord Darlington? No, I can't shake hands with you. My hands are all wet with these roses. Aren't they lovely? They came up from Selby[1] this morning.

LORD DARLINGTON. They are quite perfect. [*Sees a fan lying on the table.*] And what a wonderful fan! May I look at it?

LADY WINDERMERE. Do. Pretty, isn't it? It's got my name on it, and everything. I have only just seen it myself. It's my husband's birthday present to me. You know to-day is my birthday.

LORD DARLINGTON. No. Is it really?

LADY WINDERMERE. Yes; I'm of age to-day. Quite an important day in my life, isn't it? That is why I am giving this party to-night. Do sit down. [*Still arranging flowers*]

[1] Lord Windermere's country house was at Selby, a town in Yorkshire 175 miles north of London.

LORD DARLINGTON. [*Sitting down*] I wish I had known it was your birthday, Lady Windermere. I would have covered the whole street in front of your house with flowers for you to walk on. They are made for you. [*A short pause*]

LADY WINDERMERE. Lord Darlington, you annoyed me last night at the Foreign Office. I am afraid you are going to annoy me again.

LORD DARLINGTON. I, Lady Windermere?

[*Enter* PARKER *and* FOOTMAN *C. with tray and tea things.*]

LADY WINDERMERE. Put it there, Parker. That will do. [*Wipes her hands with her pocket handkerchief, goes to tea table L. and sits down.*] Won't you come over, Lord Darlington?

[*Exit* PARKER *C.*]

LORD DARLINGTON. [*Takes chair and goes across L. C.*] I am quite miserable, Lady Windermere. You must tell me what I did. [*Sits down at table L.*]

LADY WINDERMERE. Well, you kept paying me elaborate compliments the whole evening.

LORD DARLINGTON. [*Smiling*] Ah, nowadays we are all of us so hard up that the only pleasant things to pay *are* compliments. They're the only things we *can* pay.

LADY WINDERMERE. [*Shaking her head*] No, I am talking very seriously. You mustn't laugh, I am quite serious. I don't like compliments, and I don't see why a man should think he is pleasing a woman enormously when he says to her a whole heap of things that he doesn't mean.

LORD DARLINGTON. Ah, but I did mean them.

[*Takes tea which she offers him.*]

LADY WINDERMERE. [*Gravely*] I hope not. I should be sorry to have to quarrel with you, Lord Darlington. I like you very much, you know that. But I shouldn't like you at all if I thought you were what most other men are. Believe me, you are better than most other men, and I sometimes think you pretend to be worse.

LORD DARLINGTON. We all have our little vanities, Lady Windermere.

LADY WINDERMERE. Why do you make that your special one? [*Still seated at table L.*]

LORD DARLINGTON. [*Still seated L. C.*] Oh, nowadays so many conceited people go about society pretending to be good that I think it shows rather a sweet and modest disposition to pretend to be bad. Besides, there is this to be said. If you pretend to be good, the world takes you very seriously. If you pretend to be bad, it doesn't. Such is the astounding stupidity of optimism.

LADY WINDERMERE. Don't you *want* the world to take you seriously then, Lord Darlington?

LORD DARLINGTON. No, not the world. Who are the people the world takes seriously? All the dull people one can think of, from the bishops down to the bores. I should like *you* to take me very seriously, Lady Windermere, *you* more than anyone else in life.

LADY WINDERMERE. Why — why me?

LORD DARLINGTON. [*After a slight hesitation*] Because I think we might be great friends. Let us be great friends. You may want a friend some day.

LADY WINDERMERE. Why do you say that?

LORD DARLINGTON. Oh, we all want friends at times.

LADY WINDERMERE. I think we're very good friends already, Lord Darlington. We can always remain so as long as you don't —

LORD DARLINGTON. Don't what?

LADY WINDERMERE. Don't spoil it by saying extravagant, silly things to me. You think I am a Puritan, I suppose? Well, I have something of the Puritan in me. I was brought up like that. I am glad of it. My mother died when I was a mere child. I lived always with Lady Julia, my father's eldest sister, you know. She was stern to me, but she taught me, what the world is forgetting, the difference that there is between what is right

and what is wrong. *She* allowed of no compromise. *I* allow of none.

LORD DARLINGTON. My dear Lady Windermere!

LADY WINDERMERE. [*Leaning back on the sofa*] You look on me as being behind the age. — Well, I am! I should be sorry to be on the same level as an age like this.

LORD DARLINGTON. You think the age very bad?

LADY WINDERMERE. Yes. Nowadays people seem to look on life as a speculation. It is not a speculation. It is a sacrament. Its ideal is Love. Its purification is sacrifice.

LORD DARLINGTON. [*Smiling*] Oh, anything is better than being sacrificed!

LADY WINDERMERE. [*Leaning forward*] Don't say that.

LORD DARLINGTON. I do say it. I feel it — I know it.

[*Enter* PARKER *C.*]

PARKER. The men want to know if they are to put the carpets on the terrace for to-night, my lady?

LADY WINDERMERE. You don't think it will rain, Lord Darlington, do you?

LORD DARLINGTON. I won't hear of its raining on your birthday!

LADY WINDERMERE. Tell them to do it at once, Parker.

[*Exit* PARKER *C.*]

LORD DARLINGTON. [*Still seated*] Do you think, then — of course I am only putting an imaginary instance — do you think that, in the case of a young married couple, say about two years married, if the husband suddenly becomes the intimate friend of a woman of — well, more than doubtful character, is always calling upon her, lunching with her, and probably paying her bills — do you think that the wife should not console herself?

LADY WINDERMERE. [*Frowning*] Console herself?

LORD DARLINGTON. Yes, I think she should — I think she has the right.

LADY WINDERMERE. Because the husband is vile — should the wife be vile also?

LORD DARLINGTON. Vileness is a terrible word, Lady Windermere.

LADY WINDERMERE. It is a terrible thing, Lord Darlington.

LORD DARLINGTON. Do you know I am afraid that good people do a great deal of harm in this world. Certainly the greatest harm they do is that they make badness of such extraordinary importance. It is absurd to divide people into good and bad. People are either charming or tedious. I take the side of the charming, and you, Lady Windermere, can't help belonging to them.

LADY WINDERMERE. Now, Lord Darlington. [*Rising and crossing R., front of him*] Don't stir, I am merely going to finish my flowers. [*Goes to table R.C.*]

LORD DARLINGTON. [*Rising and moving chair*] And I must say I think you are very hard on modern life, Lady Windermere. Of course there is much against it, I admit. Most women, for instance, nowadays, are rather mercenary.

LADY WINDERMERE. Don't talk about such people.

LORD DARLINGTON. Well, then, setting mercenary people aside, who, of course, are dreadful, do you think seriously that women who have committed what the world calls a fault should never be forgiven?

LADY WINDERMERE. [*Standing at table*] I think they should never be forgiven.

LORD DARLINGTON. And men? Do you think that there should be the same laws for men as there are for women?

LADY WINDERMERE. Certainly!

LORD DARLINGTON. I think life too complex a thing to be settled by these hard and fast rules.

LADY WINDERMERE. If we had "these hard and fast rules," we should find life much more simple.

LORD DARLINGTON. You allow of no exceptions?

LADY WINDERMERE. None!

LORD DARLINGTON. Ah, what a fascinating Puritan you are, Lady Windermere!

LADY WINDERMERE. The adjective was unnecessary, Lord Darlington.

LORD DARLINGTON. I couldn't help it. I can resist everything except temptation.

LADY WINDERMERE. You have the modern affectation of weakness.

LORD DARLINGTON. [*Looking at her*] It's only an affectation, Lady Windermere.

[*Enter* PARKER *C.*]

PARKER. The Duchess of Berwick and Lady Agatha Carlisle.

[*Enter the* DUCHESS OF BERWICK *and* LADY AGATHA CARLISLE *C. Exit* PARKER *C.*]

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. [*Coming down C. and shaking hands*] Dear Margaret, I am so pleased to see you. You remember Agatha, don't you? [*Crossing L.C.*] How do you do, Lord Darlington? I won't let you know my daughter, you are far too wicked.

LORD DARLINGTON. Don't say that, Duchess. As a wicked man I am a complete failure. Why, there are lots of people who say I have never really done anything wrong in the whole course of my life. Of course they only say it behind my back.

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Isn't he dreadful? Agatha, this is Lord Darlington. Mind you, don't believe a word he says. [LORD DARLINGTON *crosses R.C.*] No, no tea, thank you, dear. [*Crosses and sits on sofa.*] We have just had tea at Lady Markby's. Such bad tea, too. It was quite undrinkable. I wasn't at all surprised. Her own son-in-law supplies it. Agatha is looking forward so much to your ball to-night, dear Margaret.

LADY WINDERMERE. [*Seated L.C.*] Oh, you mustn't think it is going to be a ball, Duchess. It is only a dance in honor of my birthday. A small and early.

LORD DARLINGTON. [*Standing L. C.*] Very small, very early, and very select, Duchess.

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. [*On sofa L.*] Of course it's going to be select. But we know *that*, dear Margaret, about *your* house. It is really one of the few houses in London where I can take Agatha, and where I feel perfectly secure about poor Berwick. I don't know what society is coming to. The most dreadful people seem to go everywhere. They certainly come to my parties — the men get quite furious if one doesn't ask them. Really, someone should make a stand against it.

LADY WINDERMERE. *I* will, Duchess. I will have no one in my house about whom there is any scandal.

LORD DARLINGTON. [*R. C.*] Oh, don't say that, Lady Windermere. I should never be admitted! [*Sitting*]

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Oh, men don't matter. With women it is different. We're good. Some of us are, at least. But we are positively getting elbowed into the corner. Our husbands would really forget our existence if we didn't nag at them from time to time, just to remind them that we have a perfect legal right to do so.

LORD DARLINGTON. It's a curious thing, Duchess, about the game of marriage — a game, by the way, that is going out of fashion — the wives hold all the honors and invariably lose the odd trick.

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. The odd trick? Is that the husband, Lord Darlington?

LORD DARLINGTON. It would be rather a good name for the modern husband.

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Dear Lord Darlington, how thoroughly depraved you are!

LADY WINDERMERE. Lord Darlington is trivial.

LORD DARLINGTON. Ah, don't say that, Lady Windermere.

LADY WINDERMERE. Why do you *talk* so trivially about life, then?

LORD DARLINGTON. Because I think that life is far too important a thing ever to talk seriously about it. [*Moves up C.*]

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. What does he mean? Do, as a concession to my poor wits, Lord Darlington, just explain to me what you really mean.

LORD DARLINGTON. [*Coming down back of table*] I think I had better not, Duchess. Nowadays to be intelligible is to be found out. Good-by! [*Shakes hands with* DUCHESS.] And now, [*Goes up stage.*] Lady Windermere, good-by. I may come to-night, mayn't I? Do let me come.

LADY WINDERMERE. [*Standing up stage with* LORD DARLINGTON] Yes, certainly. But you are not to say foolish, insincere things to people.

LORD DARLINGTON. [*Smiling*] Ah! you are beginning to reform me. It is a dangerous thing to reform anyone, Lady Windermere. [*Bows, and exit C.*]

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. [*Who has risen, goes C.*] What a charming, wicked creature! I like him so much. I'm quite delighted he's gone! How sweet you're looking! Where *do* you get your gowns? And now I must tell you how sorry I am for you, dear Margaret. [*Crosses to sofa and sits with* LADY WINDERMERE.] Agatha, darling!

LADY AGATHA. Yes, Mamma. [*Rises.*]

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Will you go and look over the photograph album that I see there?

LADY AGATHA. Yes, Mamma. [*Goes to table L.*]

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Dear girl! She is so fond of photographs of Switzerland. Such a pure taste, I think. But I really am so sorry for you, Margaret.

LADY WINDERMERE. [*Smiling*] Why, Duchess?

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Oh, on account of that horrid woman. She dresses so well, too, which makes it much worse, sets such a dreadful example. Augustus — you know my disreputable brother — such a trial to us all — well, Augustus is completely infatuated about her. It is quite scandalous, for she is absolutely inadmissible into society. Many a woman has a past, but I am told that she has at least a dozen, and that they all fit.

LADY WINDERMERE. Whom are you talking about, Duchess?

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. About Mrs. Erlynne.

LADY WINDERMERE. Mrs. Erlynne? I never heard of her, Duchess. And what *has* she to do with me?

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. My poor child! Agatha, darling!

LADY AGATHA. Yes, Mamma.

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Will you go out on the terrace and look at the sunset?

LADY AGATHA. Yes, Mamma. [*Exit through window L.*]

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Sweet girl! So devoted to sunsets! Shows such refinement of feeling, does it not? After all, there is nothing like nature, is there?

LADY WINDERMERE. But what is it, Duchess? Why do you talk to me about this person?

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Don't you really know? I assure you we're all so distressed about it. Only last night at dear Lady Fansen's everyone was saying how extraordinary it was that, of all men in London, Windermere should behave in such a way.

LADY WINDERMERE. My husband — what has *he* got to do with any woman of that kind?

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Ah, what indeed, dear? That is the point. He goes to see her continually, and stops for hours at a time, and while he is there she is not at home to anyone. Not that many ladies call on her, dear, but she has a great many disreputable men friends — my own brother in particular, as I told you — and that is what makes it so dreadful about Windermere. We looked upon *him* as being such a model husband, but I am afraid there is no doubt about it. My dear nieces — you know the Saville girls, don't you? — such nice domestic creatures — plain, dreadfully plain, but so good — well, they're always at the window doing fancy work, and making ugly things for the poor, which I think so useful of them in these dreadful socialistic days, and this terrible woman has taken a house in Curzon Street,[1] right opposite them — such a respectable street,

[1] A fashionable street near Hyde Park; the American ambassador lives here.

too. I don't know what we're coming to! And they tell me that Windermere goes there four and five times a week — they *see* him. They can't help it — and although they never talk scandal, they — well, of course — they remark on it to everyone. And the worst of it all is, that I have been told that this woman has got a great deal of money out of somebody, for it seems that she came to London six months ago without anything at all to speak of, and now she has this charming house in Mayfair,[1] drives her pony in the Park[2] every afternoon, and all — well, all — since she has known poor dear Windermere.

LADY WINDERMERE. Oh, I can't believe it!

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. But it's quite true, my dear. The whole of London knows it. That is why I felt it was better to come and talk to you, and advise you to take Windermere away at once to Homburg[3] or to Aix,[4] where he'll have something to amuse him, and where you can watch him all day long. I assure you, my dear, that on several occasions after I was first married I had to pretend to be very ill, and was obliged to drink the most unpleasant mineral waters, merely to get Berwick out of town. He was so extremely susceptible. Though I am bound to say he never gave away any large sums of money to anybody. He is far too high-principled for that.

LADY WINDERMERE. [*Interrupting*] Duchess, Duchess, it's impossible! [*Rising and crossing stage C.*] We are only married two years. Our child is but six months old.

[*Sits in chair R. of L. table.*]

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Ah, the dear pretty baby! How is the little darling? Is it a boy or a girl? I hope a girl — ah, no, I remember it's a boy! I'm so sorry. Boys are so wicked. My boy is excessively immoral. You wouldn't believe at what hours

[1] The most fashionable club and residential district in London, lying east of Hyde Park.

[2] Hyde Park.

[3] A resort in southwestern Prussia.

[4] Aix-la-Chapelle, a city in western Prussia.

he comes home. And he's only left Oxford a few months — I really don't know what they teach them there.

LADY WINDERMERE. Are *all* men bad?

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Oh, all of them, my dear, all of them, without any exception. And they never grow any better. Men become old, but they never become good.

LADY WINDERMERE. Windermere and I married for love.

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Yes, we begin like that. It was only Berwick's brutal and incessant threats of suicide that made me accept him at all, and before the year was out he was running after all kinds of petticoats, every color, every shape, every material. In fact, before the honeymoon was over, I caught him winking at my maid, a most pretty, respectable girl. I dismissed her at once without a character.[1] — No, I remember I passed her on to my sister; poor dear Sir George is so shortsighted, I thought it wouldn't matter. But it did, though it was most unfortunate. [*Rises.*] And now, my dear child, I must go, as we are dining out. And mind you don't take this little aberration of Windermere's too much to heart. Just take him abroad, and he'll come back to you all right.

LADY WINDERMERE. Come back to me? [*C.*]

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. [*L. C.*] Yes, dear, these wicked women get our husbands away from us, but they always come back, slightly damaged, of course. And don't make scenes; men hate them!

LADY WINDERMERE. It is very kind of you, Duchess, to come and tell me all this. But I can't believe that my husband is untrue to me.

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Pretty child! I was like that once. Now I know that all men are monsters. [LADY WINDERMERE *rings bell.*] The only thing to do is to feed the wretches well. A good cook does wonders, and that I know you have. My dear Margaret, you are not going to cry?

LADY WINDERMERE. You needn't be afraid, Duchess, I never cry.

[1] Without the recommendation needed to secure another position.

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. That's quite right, dear. Crying is the refuge of plain women, but the ruin of pretty ones. Agatha, darling!

LADY AGATHA. [*Entering L.*] Yes, Mamma.

[*Stands back of table L. C.*]

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Come and bid good-by to Lady Windermere, and thank her for your charming visit. [*Coming down again*] And by the way, I must thank you for sending a card to Mr. Hopper — he's that rich young Australian people are taking such notice of just at present. His father made a great fortune by selling some kind of food in circular tins — most palatable, I believe — I fancy it is the thing the servants always refuse to eat. But the son is quite interesting. I think he's attracted by dear Agatha's clever talk. Of course, we should be very sorry to lose her, but I think that a mother who doesn't part with a daughter every season has no real affection. We're coming to-night, dear. [PARKER *opens C. doors.*] And remember my advice, take the poor fellow out of town at once; it is the only thing to do. Good-by, once more; come, Agatha.

[*Exeunt* DUCHESS *and* LADY AGATHA *C.*]

LADY WINDERMERE. How horrible! I understand now what Lord Darlington meant by the imaginary instance of the couple not two years married. Oh, it can't be true — she spoke of enormous sums of money paid to this woman. I know where Arthur keeps his bank book — in one of the drawers of that desk. I might find out by that. I *will* find out. [*Opens drawer.*] No, it is some hideous mistake. [*Rises and goes C.*] Some silly scandal! He loves *me*! He loves *me*! But why should I not look? I am his wife, I have a right to look! [*Returns to bureau, takes out book and examines it, page by page, smiles and gives a sigh of relief.*] I knew it, there is not a word of truth in this stupid story. [*Puts book back in drawer. As she does so, starts and takes out another book.*] A second book — private — locked! [*Tries to open it, but fails. Sees paper knife on bureau, and with it cuts cover from book. Begins to start at the first page.*] Mrs. Erlynne — £600 — Mrs.

Erlynne — £700 — Mrs. Erlynne — £400. Oh! it is true! it is true! How horrible! [*Throws book on floor.*]

[*Enter* Lord Windermere *C.*]

Lord Windermere. Well, dear, has the fan been sent home yet? [*Going R. C. sees book.*] Margaret, you have cut open my bank book. You have no right to do such a thing!

Lady Windermere. You think it wrong that you are found out, don't you?

Lord Windermere. I think it wrong that a wife should spy on her husband.

Lady Windermere. I did not spy on you. I never knew of this woman's existence till half an hour ago. Someone who pitied me was kind enough to tell me what everyone in London knows already — your daily visits to Curzon Street, your mad infatuation, the monstrous sums of money you squander on this infamous woman! [*Crossing L.*]

Lord Windermere. Margaret, don't talk like that of Mrs. Erlynne; you don't know how unjust it is!

Lady Windermere. [*Turning to him*] You are very jealous of Mrs. Erlynne's honor. I wish you had been as jealous of mine.

Lord Windermere. Your honor is untouched, Margaret. You don't think for a moment that — [*Puts book back into desk.*]

Lady Windermere. I think that you spend your money strangely. That is all. Oh, don't imagine I mind about the money. As far as I am concerned, you may squander everything we have. But what I *do* mind is that you who have loved me, you who have taught me to love you, should pass from the love that is given to the love that is bought. Oh, it's horrible! [*Sits on sofa.*] And it is I who feel degraded. *You* don't feel anything. I feel stained, utterly stained. You can't realize how hideous the last six months seem to me now — every kiss you have given me is tainted in my memory.

LORD WINDERMERE. [*Crossing to her*] Don't say that, Margaret. I never loved anyone in the whole world but you.

LADY WINDERMERE. [*Rises.*] Who is this woman, then? Why do you take a house for her?

LORD WINDERMERE. I did not take a house for her.

LADY WINDERMERE. You gave her the money to do it, which is the same thing.

LORD WINDERMERE. Margaret, as far as I have known Mrs. Erlynne —

LADY WINDERMERE. Is there a Mr. Erlynne — or is he a myth?

LORD WINDERMERE. Her husband died many years ago. She is alone in the world.

LADY WINDERMERE. No relations? [*A pause*]

LORD WINDERMERE. None.

LADY WINDERMERE. Rather curious, isn't it? [*L.*]

LORD WINDERMERE. [*L. C.*] Margaret, I was saying to you — and I beg you to listen to me — that as far as I have known Mrs. Erlynne, she has conducted herself well. If years ago —

LADY WINDERMERE. Oh! [*Crossing R. C.*] I don't want details about her life.

LORD WINDERMERE. I am not going to give you any details about her life. I tell you simply this — Mrs. Erlynne was once honored, loved, respected. She was well born, she had a position — she lost everything — threw it away, if you like. That makes it all the more bitter. Misfortunes one can endure — they come from outside, they are accidents. But to suffer for one's own faults — ah! there is the sting of life. It was twenty years ago, too. She was little more than a girl then. She had been a wife for even less time than you have.

LADY WINDERMERE. I am not interested in her — and — you should not mention this woman and me in the same breath. It is an error of taste. [*Sitting R. at desk*]

LORD WINDERMERE. Margaret, you could save this woman. She wants to get back into society, and she wants you to help her. [*Crossing to her*]

LADY WINDERMERE. Me!

LORD WINDERMERE. Yes, you.

LADY WINDERMERE. How impertinent of her! [*A pause*]

LORD WINDERMERE. Margaret, I came to ask you a great favor, and I still ask it of you, though you have discovered what I had intended you should never have known, that I have given Mrs. Erlynne a large sum of money. I want you to send her an invitation for our party to-night. [*Standing L. of her*]

LADY WINDERMERE. You are mad. [*Rises.*]

LORD WINDERMERE. I entreat you. People may chatter about her, do chatter about her, of course, but they don't know anything definite against her. She has been to several houses — not to houses where you would go, I admit, but still to houses where women who are in what is called Society nowadays do go. That does not content her. She wants you to receive her once.

LADY WINDERMERE. As a triumph for her, I suppose?

LORD WINDERMERE. No; but because she knows that you are a good woman — and that if she comes here once she will have a chance of a happier, a surer life than she has had. She will make no further effort to know you. Won't you help a woman who is trying to get back?

LADY WINDERMERE. No! If a woman really repents, she never wishes to return to the society that has made or seen her ruin.

LORD WINDERMERE. I beg of you.

LADY WINDERMERE. [*Crossing to door R.*] I am going to dress for dinner, and don't mention the subject again this evening. Arthur, [*Going to him C.*] you fancy because I have no father or mother that I am alone in the world and that you can treat me as you choose. You are wrong, I have friends, many friends.

LORD WINDERMERE. [*L. C.*] Margaret, you are talking foolishly, recklessly. I won't argue with you, but I insist upon your asking Mrs. Erlynne to-night.

LADY WINDERMERE. [*R. C.*] I shall do nothing of the kind. [*Crossing L. C.*]

LORD WINDERMERE. You refuse? [*C.*]

LADY WINDERMERE. Absolutely!

LORD WINDERMERE. Ah, Margaret, do this for my sake; it is her last chance.

LADY WINDERMERE. What has that to do with me?

LORD WINDERMERE. How hard good women are!

LADY WINDERMERE. How weak bad men are!

LORD WINDERMERE. Margaret, none of us men may be good enough for the women we marry — that is quite true — but you don't imagine I would ever — oh, the suggestion is monstrous!

LADY WINDERMERE. Why should *you* be different from other men? I am told that there is hardly a husband in London who does not waste his life over *some* shameful passion.

LORD WINDERMERE. I am not one of them.

LADY WINDERMERE. I am not sure of that!

LORD WINDERMERE. You are sure in your heart. But don't make chasm after chasm between us. God knows the last few minutes have thrust us wide enough apart. Sit down and write the card.

LADY WINDERMERE. Nothing in the whole world would induce me.

LORD WINDERMERE. [*Crossing to the bureau*] Then I will. [*Rings electric bell, sits, and writes card.*]

LADY WINDERMERE. You are going to invite this woman? [*Crossing to him*]

LORD WINDERMERE. Yes. [*Pause*]

[*Enter* PARKER.]

LORD WINDERMERE. Parker?

PARKER. Yes, my lord. [*Comes down L.C.*]

LORD WINDERMERE. Have this note sent to Mrs. Erlynne at No. 84A Curzon Street. [*Crossing to L.C. and giving note to* PARKER] There is no answer.

[*Exit* PARKER *C.*]

LADY WINDERMERE. Arthur, if that woman comes here, I shall insult her.

LORD WINDERMERE. Margaret, don't say that.

LADY WINDERMERE. I mean it.

LORD WINDERMERE. Child, if you did such a thing, there's not a woman in London who wouldn't pity you.

LADY WINDERMERE. There is not a *good* woman in London who would not applaud me. We have been too lax. We must make an example. I propose to begin to-night. [*Picking up fan*] Yes, you gave me this fan to-day; it was your birthday present. If that woman crosses my threshold, I shall strike her across the face with it.

LORD WINDERMERE. Margaret, you couldn't do such a thing.

LADY WINDERMERE. You don't know me! [*Moves R.*]

[*Enter* PARKER.]

LADY WINDERMERE. Parker!

PARKER. Yes, my lady.

LADY WINDERMERE. I shall dine in my own room. I don't want dinner, in fact. See that everything is ready by half past ten. And, Parker, be sure you pronounce the names of the guests very distinctly to-night. Sometimes you speak so fast that I miss them. I am particularly anxious to hear the names quite clearly, so as to make no mistake. You understand, Parker?

PARKER. Yes, my lady.

LADY WINDERMERE. That will do!

[*Exit* PARKER *C.*]

[*Speaking to* LORD WINDERMERE] Arthur, if that woman comes here — I warn you —

LORD WINDERMERE. Margaret, you'll ruin us!

LADY WINDERMERE. Us! From this moment my life is separate from yours. But if you wish to avoid a public scandal, write at once to this woman, and tell her that I forbid her to come here!

LORD WINDERMERE. I will not — I cannot — she must come!

Lady Windermere. Then I shall do exactly as I have said. [*Goes R.*] You leave me no choice. [*Exit R.*]

Lord Windermere. [*Calling after her*] Margaret! Margaret! [*A pause*] My God! What shall I do! I dare not tell her who this woman really is. The shame would kill her.

[*Sinks down into a chair and buries his face in his hands.*]

CURTAIN

ACT II

Scene. *Drawing-room in* Lord Windermere's *house. Door R. U. opens into ballroom, where band is playing. Door L. through which guests are entering. Door L. U. opens on an illuminated terrace. Palms, flowers, and brilliant lights. Room crowded with guests.* Lady Windermere *is receiving them*

Duchess of Berwick. [*Up C.*] So strange Lord Windermere isn't here. Mr. Hopper is very late, too. You have kept those five dances for him, Agatha! [*Comes down.*]

Lady Agatha. Yes, Mamma.

Duchess of Berwick. [*Sitting on sofa*] Just let me see your card. I'm so glad Lady Windermere has revived cards. — They're a mother's only safeguard. You dear simple little thing! [*Scratches out two names.*] No nice girl should ever waltz with such particularly younger[1] sons! It looks so fast! The last two dances you must pass on the terrace with Mr. Hopper.

[*Enter* Mr. Dumby *and* Lady Plymdale *from the ballroom.*]

Lady Agatha. Yes, Mamma.

Duchess of Berwick. [*Fanning herself*] The air is so pleasant here.

Parker. Mrs. Cowper-Cowper. Lady Stutfield. Sir James Royston. Mr. Guy Berkeley.

[*These people enter as announced.*]

[1] Without prospects of inheriting property.

DUMBY. Good evening, Lady Stutfield. I suppose this will be the last ball of the season.

LADY STUTFIELD. I suppose so, Mr. Dumby. It's been a delightful season, hasn't it?

DUMBY. Quite delightful! Good evening, Duchess. I suppose this will be the last ball of the season?

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. I suppose so, Mr. Dumby. It has been a very dull season, hasn't it?

DUMBY. Dreadfully dull! dreadfully dull!

MRS. COWPER-COWPER. Good evening, Mr. Dumby. I suppose this will be the last ball of the season?

DUMBY. Oh, I think not. There'll probably be two more.

[*Wanders back to* LADY PLYMDALE.]

PARKER. Mr. Rufford. Lady Jedburgh and Miss Graham. Mr. Hopper.

[*These people enter as announced.*]

HOPPER. How do you do, Lady Windermere? How do you do, Duchess? [*Bows to* LADY AGATHA.]

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Dear Mr. Hopper, how nice of you to come so early. We all know how you are run after in London.

HOPPER. Capital place! London. They are not nearly so exclusive in London as they are in Sydney.

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Ah! we know your value, Mr. Hopper. We wish there were more like you. It would make life so much easier. Do you know, Mr. Hopper, dear Agatha and I are so much interested in Australia. It must be so pretty with all the dear little kangaroos flying about. Agatha has found it on the map. What a curious shape it is! Just like a large packing-case. However, it is a very young country, isn't it?

HOPPER. Wasn't it made at the same time as the others, Duchess?

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. How clever you are, Mr. Hopper. You have a cleverness quite of your own. Now I mustn't keep you.

HOPPER. But I should like to dance with Lady Agatha, Duchess.

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Well, I *hope* she has a dance left. Have you got a dance left, Agatha?

LADY AGATHA. Yes, Mamma.

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. The next one?

LADY AGATHA. Yes, Mamma.

HOPPER. May I have the pleasure?

[LADY AGATHA *bows.*]

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Mind you take great care of my little chatterbox, Mr. Hopper.

[LADY AGATHA *and* MR. HOPPER *pass into ballroom.*]

[*Enter* LORD WINDERMERE *L.*]

LORD WINDERMERE. Margaret, I want to speak to you.

LADY WINDERMERE. In a moment.

[*The music stops.*]

PARKER. Lord Augustus Lorton.

[*Enter* LORD AUGUSTUS LORTON.]

LORD AUGUSTUS. Good evening, Lady Windermere.

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Sir James, will you take me into the ballroom? Augustus has been dining with us to-night. I really have had quite enough of dear Augustus for the moment.

[SIR JAMES R. *gives the* DUCHESS *his arm and escorts her into the ballroom.*]

PARKER. Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Bowden. Lord and Lady Paisley. Lord Darlington.

[*These people enter as announced.*]

LORD AUGUSTUS. [*Coming up to* LORD WINDERMERE] Want to speak to you particularly, dear boy. I'm worn to a shadow. Know I don't look it. None of us men do look what we really are. Demmed good thing, too. What I want to know is this.

Who is she? Where does she come from? Why hasn't she got any demmed relations? Demmed nuisance, relations! But they make one so demmed respectable.

LORD WINDERMERE. You are talking of Mrs. Erlynne, I suppose. I only met her six months ago. Till then I never knew of her existence.

LORD AUGUSTUS. You have seen a good deal of her since then.

LORD WINDERMERE. [*Coldly*] Yes, I have seen a good deal of her since then. I have just seen her.

LORD AUGUSTUS. Egad! the women are very down on her. I have been dining with Arabella this evening. By Jove! you should have heard what she said about Mrs. Erlynne. She didn't leave a rag on her. . . . [*Aside*] Berwick and I told her that didn't matter much, as the lady in question must have an extremely fine figure. You should have seen Arabella's expression! . . . But, look here, dear boy. I don't know what to do about Mrs. Erlynne. Egad! I might be married to her; she treats me with such demmed indifference. She's deuced clever, too! She explains everything. Egad! she explains you. She has got any amount of explanations for you — and all of them different.

LORD WINDERMERE. No explanations are necessary about my friendship with Mrs. Erlynne.

LORD AUGUSTUS. Hem! Well, look here, dear old fellow. Do you think she will ever get into this demmed thing called Society? Would you introduce her to your wife? No use beating about the confounded bush. Would you do that?

LORD WINDERMERE. Mrs. Erlynne is coming here to-night.

LORD AUGUSTUS. Your wife has sent her a card?

LORD WINDERMERE. Mrs. Erlynne has received a card.

LORD AUGUSTUS. Then she's all right, dear boy. But why didn't you tell me that before? It would have saved me a heap of worry and demmed misunderstandings!

[LADY AGATHA *and* MR. HOPPER *cross, and exit on terrace L. U. E.*]

PARKER. Mr. Cecil Graham!

[*Enter* Mr. Cecil Graham.]

Cecil Graham. [*Bows to* Lady Windermere, *passes over and shakes hands with* Lord Windermere.] Good evening, Arthur. Why don't you ask me how I am? I like people to ask me how I am. It shows a widespread interest in my health. Now to-night I am not at all well. Been dining with my people. Wonder why it is one's people are always so tedious? My father would talk morality after dinner. I told him he was old enough to know better. But my experience is that as soon as people are old enough to know better, they don't know anything at all. Hullo, Tuppy! Hear you're going to be married again; thought you were tired of that game.

Lord Augustus. You're excessively trivial, my dear boy, excessively trivial!

Cecil Graham. By the way, Tuppy, which is it? Have you been twice married and once divorced, or twice divorced and once married? I say, you've been twice divorced and once married. It seems so much more probable.

Lord Augustus. I have a very bad memory. I really don't remember which. [*Moves away R.*]

Lady Plymdale. Lord Windermere, I've something most particular to ask you.

Lord Windermere. I'm afraid — if you will excuse me — I must join my wife.

Lady Plymdale. Oh, you mustn't dream of such a thing. It's most dangerous nowadays for a husband to pay any attention to his wife in public. It always makes people think that he beats her when they're alone. The world has grown so suspicious of anything that looks like a happy married life. But I'll tell you what it is at supper. [*Moves toward door of ballroom.*]

Lord Windermere. [*C.*] Margaret, I *must* speak to you.

Lady Windermere. Will you hold my fan for me, Lord Darlington? Thanks. [*Comes down to him.*]

LORD WINDERMERE. [*Crossing to her*] Margaret, what you said before dinner was, of course, impossible?

LADY WINDERMERE. That woman is not coming here to-night!

LORD WINDERMERE. [*R.C.*] Mrs. Erlynne is coming here; and if you in any way annoy or wound her, you will bring shame and sorrow on us both. Remember that! Ah, Margaret! only trust me! A wife should trust her husband!

LADY WINDERMERE. [*C.*] London is full of women who trust their husbands. One can always recognize them. They look so thoroughly unhappy. I am not going to be one of them. [*Moves up.*] Lord Darlington, will you give me back my fan, please? Thanks. . . . A useful thing, a fan, isn't it? . . . I want a friend to-night, Lord Darlington. I didn't know I would want one so soon.

LORD DARLINGTON. Lady Windermere! I knew the time would come some day; but why to-night?

LORD WINDERMERE. I *will* tell her. I must. It would be terrible if there were any scene. Margaret —

PARKER. Mrs. Erlynne.

[LORD WINDERMERE *starts.*]

[MRS. ERLYNNE *enters, very beautifully dressed and very dignified.* LADY WINDERMERE *clutches at her fan, then lets it drop on the floor. She bows coldly to* MRS. ERLYNNE, *who bows to her sweetly in turn, and sails into the room.*]

LORD DARLINGTON. You have dropped your fan, Lady Windermere. [*Picks it up and hands it to her.*]

MRS. ERLYNNE. [*C.*] How do you do, again, Lord Windermere? How charming your sweet wife looks! Quite a picture!

LORD WINDERMERE. [*In a low voice*] It was terribly rash of you to come!

MRS. ERLYNNE. [*Smiling*] The wisest thing I ever did in my life. And, by the way, you must pay me a good deal of attention

this evening. I am afraid of the women. You must introduce me to some of them. The men I can always manage. How do you do, Lord Augustus? You have quite neglected me lately. I have not seen you since yesterday. I am afraid you're faithless. Everyone told me so.

LORD AUGUSTUS. [*R.*] Now really, Mrs. Erlynne, allow me to explain.

MRS. ERLYNNE. [*R.C.*] No, dear Lord Augustus, you can't explain anything. It is your chief charm.

LORD AUGUSTUS. Ah! if you find charms in me, Mrs. Erlynne —

[*They converse together.* LORD WINDERMERE *moves uneasily about the room, watching* MRS. ERLYNNE.]

LORD DARLINGTON. [*To* LADY WINDERMERE] How pale you are!

LADY WINDERMERE. Cowards are always pale.

LORD DARLINGTON. You look faint. Come out on the terrace.

LADY WINDERMERE. Yes. [*To* PARKER] Parker, send my cloak out.

MRS. ERLYNNE. [*Crossing to her*] Lady Windermere, how beautifully your terrace is illuminated. Reminds me of Prince Doria's at Rome.

[LADY WINDERMERE *bows coldly, and goes off with* LORD DARLINGTON.]

Oh, how do you do, Mr. Graham? Isn't that your aunt, Lady Jedburgh? I should so much like to know her.

CECIL GRAHAM. [*After a moment's hesitation and embarrassment*] Oh, certainly, if you wish it. Aunt Caroline, allow me to introduce Mrs. Erlynne.

MRS. ERLYNNE. So pleased to meet you, Lady Jedburgh. [*Sits beside her on the sofa.*] Your nephew and I are great friends. I am so much interested in his political career. I think he's sure to be a wonderful success. He thinks like a Tory, and talks like a Radical, and that's so important nowadays. He's such a brilliant talker, too. But we all know from whom he inherits that.

Lord Allandale was saying to me only yesterday in the Park that Mr. Graham talks almost as well as his aunt.

LADY JEDBURGH. [*R.*] Most kind of you to say these charming things to me!

[MRS. ERLYNNE *smiles and continues conversation.*]

DUMBY. [*To* CECIL GRAHAM] Did you introduce Mrs. Erlynne to Lady Jedburgh?

CECIL GRAHAM. Had to, my dear fellow. Couldn't help it. That woman can make one do anything she wants. How, I don't know.

DUMBY. Hope to goodness she won't speak to me!

[*Saunters toward* LADY PLYMDALE.]

MRS. ERLYNNE. [*C. to* LADY JEDBURGH] On Thursday? With great pleasure. [*Rises and speaks to* LORD WINDERMERE, *laughing.*] What a bore it is to have to be civil to these old dowagers. But they always insist on it.

LADY PLYMDALE. [*To* MR. DUMBY] Who is that well-dressed woman talking to Windermere?

DUMBY. Haven't got the slightest idea. Looks like an *edition de luxe* of a wicked French novel, meant specially for the English market.

MRS. ERLYNNE. So that is poor Dumby with Lady Plymdale? I hear she is frightfully jealous of him. He doesn't seem anxious to speak to me to-night. I suppose he is afraid of her. Those straw-colored women have dreadful tempers. Do you know, I think I'll dance with you first, Windermere. [LORD WINDERMERE *bites his lip and frowns.*] It will make Lord Augustus so jealous! Lord Augustus! [LORD AUGUSTUS *comes down.*] Lord Windermere insists on my dancing with him first, and, as it's his own house, I can't well refuse. You know I would sooner dance with you.

LORD AUGUSTUS. [*With a low bow*] I wish I could think so, Mrs. Erlynne.

MRS. ERLYNNE. You know it far too well. I can fancy a person dancing through life with you and finding it charming.

LORD AUGUSTUS. [*Placing his hand on his white waistcoat*]

Oh, thank you, thank you, thank you. You are the most adorable of all ladies!

Mrs. Erlynne. What a nice speech! So simple and so sincere! Just the sort of speech I like. Well, you shall hold my bouquet. [*Goes toward ballroom on* Lord Windermere's *arm.*] Ah, Mr. Dumby, how are you? I am so sorry I have been out the last three times you have called. Come and lunch on Friday.

Dumby. [*With perfect nonchalance*] Delighted.

[Lady Plymdale *glares with indignation at* Mr. Dumby. Lord Augustus *follows* Mrs. Erlynne *and* Lord Windermere *into the ballroom, holding bouquet.*]

Lady Plymdale. [*To* Mr. Dumby] What an absolute brute you are! I never can believe a word you say! Why did you tell me you didn't know her? What do you mean by calling on her three times running? You are not to go to lunch there; of course you understand that?

Dumby. My dear Laura, I wouldn't dream of going!

Lady Plymdale. You haven't told me her name yet! Who is she?

Dumby. [*Coughs slightly and smooths his hair.*] She's a Mrs. Erlynne.

Lady Plymdale. *That* woman!

Dumby. Yes, that is what everyone calls her.

Lady Plymdale. How very interesting! How intensely interesting! I really must have a good stare at her. [*Goes to door of ballroom and looks in.*] I have heard the most shocking things about her. They say she is ruining poor Windermere. And Lady Windermere, who goes in for being so proper, invites her! How extremely amusing! It takes a thoroughly good woman to do a thoroughly stupid thing. You are to lunch there on Friday!

Dumby. Why?

Lady Plymdale. Because I want you to take my husband with you. He has been so attentive lately that he has become a perfect nuisance. Now this woman is just the thing for him.

He'll dance attendance upon her as long as she lets him, and won't bother me. I assure you, women of that kind are most useful. They form the basis of other people's marriages.

DUMBY. What a mystery you are!

LADY PLYMDALE. [*Looking at him*] I wish *you* were!

DUMBY. I am — to myself. I am the only person in the world I should like to know thoroughly; but I don't see any chance of it just at present.

[*They pass into the ballroom, and* LADY WINDERMERE *and* LORD DARLINGTON *enter from the terrace.*]

LADY WINDERMERE. Yes. Her coming here is monstrous, unbearable. I know now what you meant to-day at tea time. Why didn't you tell me right out? You should have.

LORD DARLINGTON. I couldn't. A man can't tell these things about another man. But if I had known he was going to make you ask her to-night, I think I would have told you. That insult, at any rate, you would have been spared.

LADY WINDERMERE. I did not ask her. He insisted on her coming — against my entreaties — against my commands. Oh! the house is tainted for me! I feel that every woman here sneers at me as she dances by with my husband. What have I done to deserve this? I gave him all my life. He took it — used it — spoiled it! I am degraded in my own eyes; and I lack courage — I am a coward! [*Sits down on sofa.*]

LORD DARLINGTON. If I know you at all, I know that you can't live with a man who treats you like this. What sort of life would you have with him? You would feel that he was lying to you every moment of the day. You would feel that the look in his eyes was false, his voice false, his touch false, his passion false. He would come to you when he was weary of others; you would have to comfort him. He would come to you when he was devoted to others; you would have to charm him. You would have to be to him the mask of his real life, the cloak to hide his secret.

LADY WINDERMERE. You are right — you are terribly right.

But where am I to turn? You said you would be my friend, Lord Darlington.—Tell me, what am I to do? Be my friend now.

Lord Darlington. Between men and women there is no friendship possible. There is passion, enmity, worship, love, but no friendship. I love you —

Lady Windermere. No, no! [*Rises.*]

Lord Darlington. Yes, I love you! You are more to me than anything in the whole world. What does your husband give you? Nothing. Whatever is in him he gives to this wretched woman, whom he has thrust into your society, into your home, to shame you before everyone. I offer you my life —

Lady Windermere. Lord Darlington!

Lord Darlington. My life — my whole life. Take it, and do with it what you will. . . . I love you — love you as I have never loved any living thing. From the moment I met you I loved you, loved you blindly, adoringly, madly! You did not know it then — you know it now! Leave this house to-night. I won't tell you that the world matters nothing, or the world's voice, or the voice of society. They matter a good deal. They matter far too much. But there are moments when one has to choose between living one's own life, fully, entirely, completely — or dragging out some false, shallow, degrading existence that the world in its hypocrisy demands. You have that moment now. Choose! Oh, my love, choose!

Lady Windermere. [*Moving slowly away from him and looking at him with startled eyes*] I have not the courage.

Lord Darlington. [*Following her*] Yes; you have the courage. There may be six months of pain, of disgrace even; but when you no longer bear his name, when you bear mine, all will be well. Margaret, my love, my wife that shall be some day — yes, my wife! You know it! What are you now? This woman has the place that belongs by right to you. Oh, go — go out of this house, with head erect, with a smile upon your lips, with courage in your eyes. All London will know why you did it; and who will blame you? No one. If they do, what matter?

Wrong? What is wrong? It's wrong for a man to abandon his wife for a shameless woman. It is wrong for a wife to remain with a man who so dishonors her. You said once you would make no compromise with things. Make none now. Be brave! Be yourself!

LADY WINDERMERE. I am afraid of being myself. Let me think! Let me wait! My husband may return to me.

[*Sits down on sofa.*]

LORD DARLINGTON. And you would take him back! You are not what I thought you were. You are just the same as every other woman. You would stand anything rather than face the censure of a world whose praise you would despise. In a week you will be driving with this woman in the Park. She will be your constant guest — your dearest friend. You would endure anything rather than break with one blow this monstrous lie. You are right. You have no courage; none!

LADY WINDERMERE. Ah, give me time to think. I cannot answer you now. [*Passes her hand nervously over her brow.*]

LORD DARLINGTON. It must be now or not at all.

LADY WINDERMERE. [*Rising from the sofa*] Then not at all!

[*A pause*]

LORD DARLINGTON. You break my heart!

LADY WINDERMERE. Mine is already broken. [*A pause*]

LORD DARLINGTON. To-morrow I leave England. This is the last time I shall ever look on you. You will never see me again. For one moment our lives met — our souls touched. They must never meet or touch again. Good-by, Margaret. [*Exit.*]

LADY WINDERMERE. How alone I am in life! How terribly alone!

[*The music stops.*]

[*Enter the* DUCHESS OF BERWICK *and* LORD PLYMDALE, *laughing and talking. Other guests come on from the ballroom.*]

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Dear Margaret, I've just been having such a delightful chat with Mrs. Erlynne. I am so sorry

for what I said to you this afternoon about her. Of course she must be all right if *you* invite her. A most attractive woman, and has such sensible views on life. Told me she entirely disapproved of people marrying more than once, so I feel quite safe about poor Augustus. Can't imagine why people speak against her. It's those horrid nieces of mine — the Saville girls — they're always talking scandal. Still, I should go to Homburg, dear, I really should. She is just a little too attractive. But where is Agatha? Oh, there she is.

[Lady Agatha *and* Mr. Hopper *enter from the terrace L. U. E.*]

Mr. Hopper, I am very angry with you. You have taken Agatha out on the terrace, and she is so delicate.

Hopper. [*L. C.*] Awfully sorry, Duchess. We went out for a moment and then got chatting together.

Duchess of Berwick. [*C.*] Ah, about dear Australia, I suppose.

Hopper. Yes.

Duchess of Berwick. Agatha, darling! [*Beckons her over.*]

Lady Agatha. Yes, Mamma!

Duchess of Berwick. [*Aside*] Did Mr. Hopper definitely —

Lady Agatha. Yes, Mamma.

Duchess of Berwick. And what answer did you give him, dear child?

Lady Agatha. Yes, Mamma.

Duchess of Berwick. [*Affectionately*] My dear one! You always say the right thing. Mr. Hopper! James! Agatha has told me everything. How cleverly you have both kept your secret!

Hopper. You don't mind my taking Agatha off to Australia, then, Duchess?

Duchess of Berwick. [*Indignantly*] To Australia? Oh, don't mention that dreadful, vulgar place.

Hopper. But she said she'd like to come with me.

Duchess of Berwick. [*Severely*] Did you say that, Agatha?

LADY AGATHA. Yes, Mamma!

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Agatha, you say the most silly things possible. I think on the whole that Grosvenor Square[1] would be a more healthy place to reside in. There are lots of vulgar people live in Grosvenor Square, but at any rate there are no horrid kangaroos crawling about. But we'll talk about that to-morrow. James, you can take Agatha down. You'll come to lunch, of course, James. At half past one instead of two. The Duke will wish to say a few words to you, I am sure.

HOPPER. I should like to have a chat with the Duke, Duchess. He has not said a single word to me yet.

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. I think you'll find he will have a great deal to say to you to-morrow.

[*Exit* LADY AGATHA *with* MR. HOPPER.]

And now good night, Margaret. I'm afraid it's the old story, dear. Love — well, not love at first sight, but love at the end of the season, which is so much more satisfactory.

LADY WINDERMERE. Good night, Duchess.

[*Exit the* DUCHESS OF BERWICK *on* LORD PLYMDALE'S *arm.*]

LADY PLYMDALE. My dear Margaret, what a handsome woman your husband has been dancing with! I should be quite jealous if I were you! Is she a great friend of yours?

LADY WINDERMERE. No!

LADY PLYMDALE. Really? Good night, dear.

[*Looks at* MR. DUMBY, *and exit.*]

DUMBY. Awful manners young Hopper has!

CECIL GRAHAM. Ah! Hopper is one of Nature's gentlemen, the worst type of gentleman I know.

DUMBY. Sensible woman, Lady Windermere. Lots of wives would have objected to Mrs. Erlynne coming. But Lady Windermere has that uncommon thing called common sense.

CECIL GRAHAM. And Windermere knows that nothing looks so like innocence as an indiscretion.

[1] Very fashionable, as in "The School for Scandal."

DUMBY. Yes; dear Windermere is becoming almost modern. Never thought he would.

[*Bows to* LADY WINDERMERE, *and exit.*]

LADY JEDBURGH. Good night, Lady Windermere. What a fascinating woman Mrs. Erlynne is! She is coming to lunch on Thursday. Won't you come too? I expect the bishop and dear Lady Merton.

LADY WINDERMERE. I am afraid I am engaged, Lady Jedburgh.

LADY JEDBURGH. So sorry. Come, dear.

[*Exeunt* LADY JEDBURGH *and* MISS GRAHAM.]

[*Enter* MRS. ERLYNNE *and* LORD WINDERMERE.]

MRS. ERLYNNE. Charming ball it has been! Quite reminds me of old days. [*Sits on the sofa.*] And I see that there are just as many fools in society as there used to be. So pleased to find that nothing has altered! Except Margaret. She's grown quite pretty. The last time I saw her — twenty years ago, she was a fright in flannel. Positive fright, I assure you. The dear Duchess! and that sweet Lady Agatha! Just the type of girl I like! Well, really, Windermere, if I am to be the Duchess's sister-in-law —

LORD WINDERMERE. [*Sitting L. of her*] But are you —

[*Exit* MR. CECIL GRAHAM *with rest of guests.* LADY WINDERMERE *watches with a look of scorn and pain* MRS. ERLYNNE *and her husband. They are unconscious of her presence.*]

MRS. ERLYNNE. Oh, yes! He's to call to-morrow at twelve o'clock. He wanted to propose to-night. In fact, he did. He kept on proposing. Poor Augustus, you know how he repeats himself. Such a bad habit! But I told him I wouldn't give him an answer till to-morrow. Of course I am going to take him. And I dare say I'll make him an admirable wife, as wives go. And there is a great deal of good in Lord Augustus. Fortu-

nately it is all on the surface. Just where good qualities should be. Of course you must help me in this matter.

LORD WINDERMERE. I am not called on to encourage Lord Augustus, I suppose?

MRS. ERLYNNE. Oh, no! I do the encouraging. But you will make me a handsome settlement, Windermere, won't you?

LORD WINDERMERE. [*Frowning*] Is that what you want to talk to me about to-night?

MRS. ERLYNNE. Yes.

LORD WINDERMERE. [*With a gesture of impatience*] I will not talk of it here.

MRS. ERLYNNE. [*Laughing*] Then we will talk of it on the terrace. Even business should have a picturesque background. Should it not, Windermere? With a proper background women can do anything.

LORD WINDERMERE. Won't to-morrow do as well?

MRS. ERLYNNE. No; you see, to-morrow I am going to accept him. And I think it would be a good thing if I was able to tell him that — well, what shall I say? — £2000 a year left to me by a third cousin — or a second husband — or some distant relative of that kind. It would be an additional attraction, wouldn't it? You have a delightful opportunity now of paying me a compliment, Windermere. But you are not very clever at paying compliments. I am afraid Margaret doesn't encourage you in that excellent habit. It's a great mistake on her part. When men give up saying what is charming, they give up thinking what is charming. But seriously, what do you say to £2000? £2500, I think. In modern life margin is everything. Windermere, don't you think the world an intensely amusing place? I do!

[*Exit on terrace with* LORD WINDERMERE. *Music strikes up in ballroom.*]

LADY WINDERMERE. To stay in this house any longer is impossible. To-night a man who loves me offered me his whole life. I refused it. It was foolish of me. I will offer him mine

now. I will give him mine. I will go to him! [*Puts on cloak and goes to door, then turns back. Sits down at table and writes a letter, puts it into an envelope, and leaves it on table.*] Arthur has never understood me. When he reads this he will. He may do as he chooses now with his life. I have done with mine as I think best, as I think right. It is he who has broken the bond of marriage — not I. I only break its bondage. [*Exit.*]

[PARKER *enters L. and crosses toward the ballroom R. Enter* MRS. ERLYNNE.]

MRS. ERLYNNE. Is Lady Windermere in the ballroom?

PARKER. Her ladyship has just gone out.

MRS. ERLYNNE. Gone out? She's not on the terrace?

PARKER. No, madam. Her ladyship has just gone out of the house.

MRS. ERLYNNE. [*Starts, and looks at the servant with a puzzled expression on her face.*] Out of the house?

PARKER. Yes, madam — her ladyship told me she had left a letter for his lordship on the table.

MRS. ERLYNNE. A letter for Lord Windermere?

PARKER. Yes, madam.

MRS. ERLYNNE. Thank you.

[*Exit* PARKER. *The music in the ballroom stops.*] Gone out of her house! A letter addressed to her husband! [*Goes over to bureau and looks at letter. Takes it up and lays it down again with a shudder of fear.*] No, no! It would be impossible! Life doesn't repeat its tragedies like that! Oh, why does this horrible fancy come across me? Why do I remember now the one moment of my life I most wish to forget? Does life repeat its tragedies? [*Tears letter open and reads it, then sinks down into a chair with a gesture of anguish.*] Oh, how terrible! The same words that twenty years ago I wrote to her father! and how bitterly I have been punished for it! No; my punishment is to-night, is now! [*Still seated R.*]

[*Enter* Lord Windermere *L. U. E.*]

Lord Windermere. Have you said good night to my wife? [*Comes C.*]

Mrs. Erlynne. [*Crushing letter in her hand*] Yes.

Lord Windermere. Where is she?

Mrs. Erlynne. She is very tired. She has gone to bed. She said she had a headache.

Lord Windermere. I must go to her. You'll excuse me?

Mrs. Erlynne. [*Rising hurriedly*] Oh, no! It's nothing serious. She's only very tired, that is all. Besides, there are people still in the supper-room. She wants you to make her apologies to them. She said she didn't wish to be disturbed. [*Drops letter.*] She asked me to tell you.

Lord Windermere. [*Picks up letter.*] You have dropped something.

Mrs. Erlynne. Oh, yes, thank you, that is mine. [*Puts out her hand to take it.*]

Lord Windermere. [*Still looking at letter*] But it's my wife's handwriting, isn't it?

Mrs. Erlynne. [*Takes the letter quickly.*] Yes, it's — an address. Will you ask them to call my carriage, please?

Lord Windermere. Certainly. [*Goes L. and exit.*]

Mrs. Erlynne. Thanks. What can I do? What can I do? I feel a passion awakening within me that I never felt before. What can it mean? The daughter must not be like the mother — that would be terrible. How can I save her? How can I save my child? A moment may ruin a life. Who knows that better than I? Windermere must be got out of the house; that is absolutely necessary. [*Goes L.*] But how shall I do it? It must be done somehow. Ah!

[*Enter* Lord Augustus *R. U. E., carrying bouquet.*]

Lord Augustus. Dear lady, I am in such suspense! May I not have an answer to my request?

MRS. ERLYNNE. Lord Augustus, listen to me. You are to take Lord Windermere down to your club at once, and keep him there as long as possible. You understand?

LORD AUGUSTUS. But you said you wished me to keep early hours!

MRS. ERLYNNE. [*Nervously*] Do what I tell you. Do what I tell you.

LORD AUGUSTUS. And my reward?

MRS. ERLYNNE. Your reward? your reward? Oh! ask me that to-morrow. But don't let Windermere out of your sight to-night. If you do I will never forgive you. I will never speak to you again. I'll have nothing to do with you. Remember, you are to keep Windermere at your club, and don't let him come back to-night. [*Exit.*]

LORD AUGUSTUS. Well, really, I might be her husband already. Positively I might. [*Follows her in a bewildered manner.*]

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE. LORD DARLINGTON'S *rooms. A large sofa is in front of fireplace R. At the back of the stage a curtain is drawn across the window. Doors L. and R. Table R. with writing materials. Table C. with siphons, glasses, and Tantalus frame. Table L. with cigar and cigarette box. Lamps lit*

LADY WINDERMERE. [*Standing by the fireplace*] Why doesn't he come? This waiting is horrible. He should be here. Why is he not here, to wake by passionate words some fire within me? I am cold — cold as a loveless thing. Arthur must have read my letter by this time. If he cared for me, he would have come after me, would have taken me back by force. But he doesn't care. He's entrammeled by this woman — fascinated by her — dominated by her. If a woman wants to hold a man, she has merely to appeal to what is worst in him. We make gods of men, and

they leave us. Others make brutes of them and they fawn and are faithful. How hideous life is! . . . Oh! it was mad of me to come here, horribly mad. And yet which is the worst, I wonder, to be at the mercy of a man who loves one, or the wife of a man who in one's own house dishonors one? What woman knows? What woman in the whole world? But will he love me always, this man to whom I am giving my life? What do I bring him? Lips that have lost the note of joy, eyes that are blighted by tears, chill hands and icy heart. I bring him nothing. I must go back — no; I can't go back, my letter has put me in their power — Arthur would not take me back! That fatal letter! No! Lord Darlington leaves England to-morrow. I will go with him — I have no choice. [*Sits down for a few moments. Then starts up and puts on her cloak.*] No, no! I will go back, let Arthur do with me what he pleases. I can't wait here. It has been madness my coming. I must go at once. As for Lord Darlington — Oh! here he is! What shall I do? What can I say to him? Will he let me go away at all? I have heard that men are brutal, horrible. . . . Oh! [*Hides her face in her hands.*]

[*Enter* Mrs Erlynne *L.*]

Mrs. Erlynne. Lady Windermere! [Lady Windermere *starts and looks up. Then recoils in contempt.*] Thank heaven I am in time. You must go back to your husband's house immediately.

Lady Windermere. Must?

Mrs. Erlynne. [*Authoritatively*] Yes, you must! There is not a second to be lost. Lord Darlington may return at any moment.

Lady Windermere. Don't come near me.

Mrs. Erlynne. Oh, you are on the brink of ruin; you are on the brink of a hideous precipice. You must leave this place at once. My carriage is waiting at the corner of the street. You must come with me and drive straight home. [Lady Windermere *throws off her cloak and flings it on the sofa.*] What are you doing?

Lady Windermere. Mrs. Erlynne — if you had not come here, I would have gone back. But now that I see you, I feel that nothing in the whole world would induce me to live under the same roof as Lord Windermere. You fill me with horror. There is something about you that stirs the wildest rage within me. And I know why you are here. My husband sent you to lure me back that I might serve as a blind to whatever relations exist between you and him.

Mrs. Erlynne. Oh! you don't think that — you can't.

Lady Windermere. Go back to my husband, Mrs. Erlynne. He belongs to you and not to me. I suppose he is afraid of a scandal. Men are such cowards. They outrage every law of the world, and are afraid of the world's tongue. But he had better prepare himself. He shall have a scandal. He shall have the worst scandal there has been in London for years. He shall see his name in every vile paper, mine on every hideous placard.

Mrs. Erlynne. No — no —

Lady Windermere. Yes, he shall! Had he come himself, I admit I would have gone back to the life of degradation you and he had prepared for me — I was going back — but to stay himself at home, and to send you as his messenger — oh! it was infamous — infamous!

Mrs. Erlynne. [*C.*] Lady Windermere you wrong me horribly — you wrong your husband horribly. He doesn't know you are here — he thinks you are safe in your own house. He thinks you are asleep in your own room. He never read the mad letter you wrote to him!

Lady Windermere. [*R.*] Never read it!

Mrs. Erlynne. No — he knows nothing about it!

Lady Windermere. How simple you think me! [*Going to her*] You are lying to me!

Mrs. Erlynne. [*Restraining herself*] I am not. I am telling you the truth.

Lady Windermere. If my husband didn't read my letter, how is it that you are here? Who told you I had left the house

you were shameless enough to enter? Who told you where I had gone to? My husband told you, and sent you to decoy me back. [*Crosses L.*]

Mrs. Erlynne. [*R.C.*] Your husband has never seen the letter. I — saw it, I opened it. I — read it.

Lady Windermere. [*Turning to her*] You opened a letter of mine to my husband? You wouldn't dare!

Mrs. Erlynne. Dare! Oh! to save you from the abyss into which you are falling, there is nothing in the world I would not dare, nothing in the whole world. Here is the letter. Your husband has never read it. He never shall read it. [*Going to fireplace*] It should never have been written. [*Tears it and throws it into the fire.*]

Lady Windermere. [*With infinite contempt in her voice and look*] How do I know that that was my letter after all? You seem to think the commonest device can take me in!

Mrs. Erlynne. Oh! why do you disbelieve everything I tell you! What object do you think I have in coming here, except to save you from utter ruin, to save you from the consequence of a hideous mistake? That letter that is burning now *was* your letter. I swear it to you!

Lady Windermere. [*Slowly*] You took good care to burn it before I had examined it. I cannot trust you. You, whose whole life is a lie, how could you speak the truth about anything? [*Sits down.*]

Mrs. Erlynne. [*Hurriedly*] Think as you like about me — say what you choose against me, but go back, go back to the husband you love.

Lady Windermere. [*Sullenly*] I do *not* love him!

Mrs. Erlynne. You do, and you know that he loves you.

Lady Windermere. He does not understand what love is. He understands it as little as you do — but I see what you want. It would be a great advantage for you to get me back. Dear Heaven! what a life I would have then! Living at the mercy of a woman who has neither mercy nor pity in her, a woman

whom it is an infamy to meet, a degradation to know, a vile woman, a woman who comes between husband and wife!

MRS. ERLYNNE. [*With a gesture of despair*] Lady Windermere, Lady Windermere, don't say such terrible things. You don't know how terrible they are, how terrible and how unjust. Listen, you must listen! Only go back to your husband, and I promise you never to communicate with him again on any pretext — never to see him — never to have anything to do with his life or yours. The money that he gave me, he gave me not through love, but through hatred, not in worship, but in contempt. The hold I have over him —

LADY WINDERMERE. [*Rising*] Ah! you admit you have a hold!

MRS. ERLYNNE. Yes, and I will tell you what it is. It is his love for you, Lady Windermere.

LADY WINDERMERE. You expect me to believe that?

MRS. ERLYNNE. You must believe it! It is true. It is his love for you that has made him submit to — oh! call it what you like, tyranny, threats, anything you choose. But it is his love for you. His desire to spare you shame, yes, shame and disgrace.

LADY WINDERMERE. What do you mean? You are insolent! What have I to do with you?

MRS. ERLYNNE. [*Humbly*] Nothing. I know it — but I tell you that your husband loves you — that you may never meet with such love again in your whole life — that such love you will never meet — and that if you throw it away, the day may come when you will starve for love and it will not be given to you, beg for love and it will be denied you — Oh! Arthur loves you!

LADY WINDERMERE. Arthur? And you tell me there is nothing between you?

MRS. ERLYNNE. Lady Windermere, before Heaven your husband is guiltless of all offense toward you! And I — I tell you that had it ever occurred to me that such a monstrous suspicion would have entered your mind, I would have died rather than have crossed your life or his — oh! died, gladly died!

[*Moves away to sofa R.*]

LADY WINDERMERE. You talk as if you had a heart. Women like you have no hearts. Heart is not in you. You are bought and sold. [*Sits L. C.*]

MRS. ERLYNNE. [*Starts, with a gesture of pain. Then restrains herself, and comes over to where* LADY WINDERMERE *is sitting. As she speaks, she stretches out her hands toward her, but does not dare to touch her.*] Believe what you choose about me. I am not worth a moment's sorrow. But don't spoil your beautiful young life on my account! You don't know what may be in store for you, unless you leave this house at once. You don't know what it is to fall into the pit, to be despised, mocked, abandoned, sneered at — to be an outcast! to find the door shut against one, to have to creep in by hideous byways, afraid every moment lest the mask should be stripped from one's face, and all the while to hear the laughter, the horrible laughter of the world, a thing more tragic than all the tears the world has ever shed. You don't know what it is. One pays for one's sin, and then one pays again, and all one's life one pays. You must never know that. — As for me, if suffering be an expiation, then at this moment I have expiated all my faults, whatever they have been; for to-night you have made a heart in one who had it not —made it and broken it — but let that pass. I may have wrecked my own life, but I will not let you wreck yours. You — why, you are a mere girl, you would be lost. You haven't got the kind of brains that enables a woman to get back. You have neither the wit nor the courage. You couldn't stand dishonor. No! Go back, Lady Windermere, to the husband who loves you, whom you love. You have a child, Lady Windermere. Go back to that child who even now, in pain or in joy, may be calling to you. [LADY WINDERMERE *rises.*] God gave you that child. He will require from you that you make his life fine, that you watch him. What answer will you make to God if his life is ruined through you? Back to your house, Lady Windermere — your husband loves you. He has never swerved for a moment from the love he bears you. But even if he had a thousand loves, you

must stay with your child. If he was harsh to you, you must stay with your child. If he ill-treated you, you must stay with your child. If he abandoned you, your place is with your child. [Lady Windermere *bursts into tears and buries her face in her hands.*] [*Rushing to her*] Lady Windermere!

Lady Windermere. [*Holding out her hands to her, helplessly, as a child might do.*] Take me home. Take me home.

Mrs. Erlynne. [*Is about to embrace her. Then restrains herself. There is a look of wonderful joy in her face.*] Come! Where is your cloak? [*Getting it from sofa*] Here. Put it on. Come at once! [*They go to the door.*]

Lady Windermere. Stop! Don't you hear voices?

Mrs. Erlynne. No, no. There is no one.

Lady Windermere. Yes, there is! Listen! Oh, that is my husband's voice! He is coming in! Save me! Oh, it's some plot! You have sent for him. [*Voices outside*]

Mrs. Erlynne. Silence! I am here to save you if I can. But I fear it is too late! There! [*Points to the curtain across the window.*] The first chance you have, slip out, if you ever get a chance!

Lady Windermere. But you!

Mrs. Erlynne. Oh, never mind me. I'll face them. [Lady Windermere *hides herself behind the curtain.*]

Lord Augustus. [*Outside*] Nonsense, dear Windermere, you must not leave me!

Mrs. Erlynne. Lord Augustus! Then it is I who am lost. [*Hesitates for a moment, then looks round and sees door R., and exit through it.*]

[*Enter* Lord Darlington, Mr. Dumby, Lord Windermere, Lord Augustus Lorton, *and* Mr. Cecil Graham.]

Dumby. What a nuisance their turning us out of the club at this hour! It's only two o'clock. [*Sinks into a chair.*] The lively part of the evening is only just beginning. [*Yawns and closes his eyes.*]

LORD WINDERMERE. It is very good of you, Lord Darlington, allowing Augustus to force our company on you, but I'm afraid I can't stay long.

LORD DARLINGTON. Really! I am so sorry! You'll take a cigar, won't you?

LORD WINDERMERE. Thanks! [*Sits down.*]

LORD AUGUSTUS. [*To* LORD WINDERMERE] My dear boy, you must not dream of going. I have a great deal to talk to you about of demmed importance, too.

[*Sits down with him at L. table.*]

CECIL GRAHAM. Oh, we all know what that is! Tuppy can't talk about anything but Mrs. Erlynne!

LORD WINDERMERE. Well, that is no business of yours, is it, Cecil?

CECIL GRAHAM. None. That is why it interests me. My own business always bores me to death. I prefer other people's.

LORD DARLINGTON. Have something to drink, you fellows. Cecil, you'll have a whisky and soda?

CECIL GRAHAM. Thanks. [*Goes to the table with* LORD DARLINGTON.] Mrs. Erlynne looked very handsome to-night, didn't she?

LORD DARLINGTON. I am not one of her admirers.

CECIL GRAHAM. I usedn't to be, but I am now. Why, she actually made me introduce her to poor dear Aunt Caroline. I believe she is going to lunch there.

LORD DARLINGTON. [*In surprise*] No?

CECIL GRAHAM. She is, really.

LORD DARLINGTON. Excuse me, you fellows. I'm going away to-morrow, and I have to write a few letters.

[*Goes to writing table and sits down.*]

DUMBY. Clever woman, Mrs. Erlynne.

CECIL GRAHAM. Hallo, Dumby! I thought you were asleep.

DUMBY. I am, I usually am!

LORD AUGUSTUS. A very clever woman. Knows perfectly well what a demmed fool I am — knows it as well as I do myself.

[CECIL GRAHAM *comes toward him laughing.*] Ah! you may laugh, my boy, but it is a great thing to come across a woman who thoroughly understands one.

DUMBY. It is an awfully dangerous thing. They always end by marrying one.

CECIL GRAHAM. But I thought, Tuppy, you were never going to see her again. Yes, you told me so yesterday evening at the club. You said you'd heard — [*Whispering to him*]

LORD AUGUSTUS. Oh, she's explained that.

CECIL GRAHAM. And the Wiesbaden[1] affair?

LORD AUGUSTUS. She's explained that, too.

DUMBY. And her income, Tuppy? Has she explained that?

LORD AUGUSTUS. [*In a very serious voice*] She's going to explain that to-morrow.

[CECIL GRAHAM *goes back to C. table.*]

DUMBY. Awfully commercial, women nowadays. Our grandmothers threw their caps over the mills,[2] of course, but, by Jove, their granddaughters only throw their caps over mills that can raise the wind for them.

LORD AUGUSTUS. You want to make her out a wicked woman. She is not!

CECIL GRAHAM. Oh! Wicked women bother one. Good women bore one. That is the only difference between them.

LORD DARLINGTON. [*Puffing a cigar*] Mrs. Erlynne has a future before her.

DUMBY. Mrs. Erlynne has a past before her.

LORD AUGUSTUS. I prefer women with a past. They're always so demmed amusing to talk to.

CECIL GRAHAM. Well, you'll have lots of topics of conversation with *her*, Tuppy. [*Rising and going to him*]

LORD AUGUSTUS. You're getting annoying, dear boy; you're getting demmed annoying.

CECIL GRAHAM. [*Puts his hands on his shoulders.*] Now,

[1] A resort in southwestern Prussia.
[2] took lovers; threw discretion to the winds.

Tuppy, you've lost your figure and you've lost your character. Don't lose your temper; you have only got one.

LORD AUGUSTUS. My dear boy, if I wasn't the most good-natured man in London —

CECIL GRAHAM. We'd treat you with more respect, wouldn't we, Tuppy? [*Strolls away.*]

DUMBY. The youth of the present day are quite monstrous. They have absolutely no respect for dyed hair.

[LORD AUGUSTUS *looks round angrily.*]

CECIL GRAHAM. Mrs. Erlynne has a very great respect for dear Tuppy.

DUMBY. Then Mrs. Erlynne sets an admirable example to the rest of her sex. It is perfectly brutal the way most women nowadays behave to men who are not their husbands.

LORD WINDERMERE. Dumby, you are ridiculous, and, Cecil, you let your tongue run away with you. You must leave Mrs. Erlynne alone. You don't really know anything about her, and you're always talking scandal against her.

CECIL GRAHAM. [*Coming toward him L. C.*] My dear Arthur, *I* never talk scandal. *I* only talk gossip.

LORD WINDERMERE. What is the difference between scandal and gossip?

CECIL GRAHAM. Oh, gossip is charming! History is merely gossip. But scandal is gossip made tedious by morality. Now I never moralize. A man who moralizes is usually a hypocrite, and a woman who moralizes is invariably plain. There is nothing in the whole world so unbecoming to a woman as a Nonconformist[1] conscience. And most women know it, I'm glad to say.

LORD AUGUSTUS. Just my sentiments, dear boy, just my sentiments.

CECIL GRAHAM. Sorry to hear it, Tuppy; whenever people agree with me, I always feel I must be wrong.

LORD AUGUSTUS. My dear boy, when I was your age —

CECIL GRAHAM. But you never were, Tuppy, and you never

[1] A Protestant dissenter, and hence a Puritan.

will be. [*Goes up C.*] I say, Darlington, let us have some cards. You'll play, Arthur, won't you?

LORD WINDERMERE. No, thanks, Cecil.

DUMBY. [*With a sigh*] Good heavens! how marriage ruins a man. It's as demoralizing as cigarettes, and far more expensive.

CECIL GRAHAM. You'll play, of course, Tuppy?

LORD AUGUSTUS. [*Pouring himself out a brandy and soda at table*] Can't, dear boy. Promised Mrs. Erlynne never to play or drink again.

CECIL GRAHAM. Now, my dear Tuppy, don't be led astray into the paths of virtue. Reformed, you would be perfectly tedious. That is the worst of women. They always want one to be good. And if we are good, when they meet us, they don't love us at all. They like to find us quite irretrievably bad, and to leave us quite unattractively good.

LORD DARLINGTON. [*Rising from R. table, where he has been writing letters*] They always do find us bad!

DUMBY. I don't think we are bad. I think we are all good except Tuppy.

LORD DARLINGTON. No, we are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars. [*Sits down at C. table.*]

DUMBY. We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars? Upon my word, you are very romantic to-night, Darlington.

CECIL GRAHAM. Too romantic! You must be in love. Who is the girl?

LORD DARLINGTON. The woman I love is not free, or thinks she isn't. [*Glances instinctively at* LORD WINDERMERE *while he speaks.*]

CECIL GRAHAM. A married woman, then! Well, there's nothing in the world like the devotion of a married woman. It's a thing no married man knows anything about.

LORD DARLINGTON. Oh, she doesn't love me. She is a good woman. She is the only good woman I have ever met in my life.

CECIL GRAHAM. The only good woman you have ever met in your life?

LORD DARLINGTON. Yes.

CECIL GRAHAM. [*Lighting a cigarette*] Well, you are a lucky fellow! Why, I have met hundreds of good women. I never seem to meet any but good women. The world is perfectly packed with good women. To know them is a middle-class education.[1]

LORD DARLINGTON. This woman has purity and innocence. She has everything we men have lost.

CECIL GRAHAM. My dear fellow, what on earth should we men do going about with purity and innocence? A carefully thought-out buttonhole is much more effective.

DUMBY. She doesn't really love you, then?

LORD DARLINGTON. No, she does not!

DUMBY. I congratulate you, my dear fellow. In this world there are only two tragedies. One is not getting what one wants, and the other is getting it. The last is much the worst, the last is a real tragedy! But I am interested to hear she does not love you. How long could you love a woman who didn't love you, Cecil?

CECIL GRAHAM. A woman who didn't love me? Oh, all my life!

DUMBY. So could I. But it's so difficult to meet one.

LORD DARLINGTON. How can you be so conceited, Dumby?

DUMBY. I didn't say it as a matter of conceit. I said it as a matter of regret. I have been wildly, madly adored. I am sorry I have. It has been an immense nuisance. I should like to be allowed a little time to myself now and then.

LORD AUGUSTUS. [*Looking round*] Time to educate yourself, I suppose.

DUMBY. No, time to forget all I have learned. That is much more important, dear Tuppy.

[LORD AUGUSTUS *moves uneasily in his chair.*]

LORD DARLINGTON. What cynics you fellows are!

CECIL GRAHAM. What is a cynic?

[*Sitting on the back of the sofa*]

[1] Parody of Steele's praise of a good woman, "to love her is a liberal education" (*Tatler*, No. 49).

LORD DARLINGTON. A man who knows the price of everything, and the value of nothing.

CECIL GRAHAM. And a sentimentalist, my dear Darlington, is a man who sees an absurd value in everything, and doesn't know the market price of any single thing.

LORD DARLINGTON. You always amuse me, Cecil. You talk as if you were a man of experience.

CECIL GRAHAM. I am. [*Moves up to front of fireplace.*]

LORD DARLINGTON. You are far too young!

CECIL GRAHAM. That is a great error. Experience is a question of instinct about life. I have got it. Tuppy hasn't. Experience is the name Tuppy gives to his mistakes. That is all.

[LORD AUGUSTUS *looks round indignantly.*]

DUMBY. Experience is the name everyone gives to their mistakes.

CECIL GRAHAM. [*Standing with his back to fireplace*] One shouldn't commit any.

[*Sees* LADY WINDERMERE'S *fan on sofa.*]

DUMBY. Life would be very dull without them.

CECIL GRAHAM. Of course you are quite faithful to this woman you are in love with, Darlington, to this good woman.

LORD DARLINGTON. Cecil, if one really loves a woman, all other women in the world become absolutely meaningless to one. Love changes one — I am changed.

CECIL GRAHAM. Dear me! How very interesting! Tuppy, I want to talk to you.

[LORD AUGUSTUS *takes no notice.*]

DUMBY. It's no use talking to Tuppy. You might just as well talk to a brick wall.

CECIL GRAHAM. But I like talking to a brick wall — it's the only thing in the world that never contradicts me! Tuppy!

LORD AUGUSTUS. Well, what is it? what is it?

[*Rising and going over to* CECIL GRAHAM]

CECIL GRAHAM. Come over here. I want you particularly. [*Aside*] Darlington has been moralizing and talking about the

purity of love, and that sort of thing, and he has got some woman in his rooms all the time.

LORD AUGUSTUS. No, really! really!

CECIL GRAHAM. [*In a low voice*] Yes, here is her fan.

[*Points to the fan.*]

LORD AUGUSTUS. [*Chuckling*] By Jove! by Jove!

LORD WINDERMERE. [*Up by door*] I am really off now, Lord Darlington. I am sorry you are leaving England so soon. Pray call on us when you come back! My wife and I will be charmed to see you!

LORD DARLINGTON. [*Up stage with* LORD WINDERMERE] I am afraid I shall be away for many years. Good night.

CECIL GRAHAM. Arthur!

LORD WINDERMERE. What?

CECIL GRAHAM. I want to speak to you for a moment. No, do come!

LORD WINDERMERE. [*Putting on his coat*] I can't — I'm off!

CECIL GRAHAM. It is something very particular. It will interest you enormously.

LORD WINDERMERE. [*Smiling*] It is some of your nonsense, Cecil.

CECIL GRAHAM. It isn't! It isn't really!

LORD AUGUSTUS. [*Going to him*] My dear fellow, you mustn't go yet. I have a lot to talk to you about. And Cecil has something to show you.

LORD WINDERMERE. [*Walking over*] Well, what is it?

CECIL GRAHAM. Darlington has got a woman here in his rooms. Here is her fan. Amusing, isn't it? [*A pause*]

LORD WINDERMERE. Good God!

[*Seizes the fan* — DUMBY *rises.*]

CECIL GRAHAM. What is the matter?

LORD WINDERMERE. Lord Darlington!

LORD DARLINGTON. [*Turning round*] Yes!

LORD WINDERMERE. What is my wife's fan doing here in your rooms? Hands off, Cecil! Don't touch me!

LORD DARLINGTON. Your wife's fan?

LORD WINDERMERE. Yes, here it is!

LORD DARLINGTON. [*Walking toward him*] I don't know!

LORD WINDERMERE. You must know. I demand an explanation! [*To* CECIL GRAHAM] Don't hold me, you fool!

LORD DARLINGTON. [*Aside*] She is here after all!

LORD WINDERMERE. Speak, sir! Why is my wife's fan here? Answer me, by God! I'll search your rooms, and if my wife's here I'll — [*Moves.*]

LORD DARLINGTON. You shall not search my rooms. You have no right to do so. I forbid you.

LORD WINDERMERE. You scoundrel! I'll not leave your room till I have searched every corner of it. What moves behind that curtain? [*Rushes toward curtain C.*]

MRS. ERLYNNE. [*Enters behind R.*] Lord Windermere!

LORD WINDERMERE. Mrs. Erlynne!

[*Everyone starts and turns round.* LADY WINDERMERE *slips out from behind the curtain and glides from the room L.*]

MRS. ERLYNNE. I am afraid I took your wife's fan in mistake for my own, when I was leaving your house to-night. I am so sorry.

[*Takes fan from him.* LORD WINDERMERE *looks at her in contempt.* LORD DARLINGTON *in mingled astonishment and anger.* LORD AUGUSTUS *turns away. The other men smile at each other.*]

CURTAIN

ACT IV

SCENE. *Same as in Act I*

LADY WINDERMERE. [*Lying on sofa*] How can I tell him? I can't tell him. It would kill me. I wonder what happened after I escaped from that horrible room. Perhaps she told them the true reason of her being there, and the real meaning of that — fatal

fan of mine. Oh, if he knows — how can I look him in the face again! He would never forgive me. [*Touches bell.*] How securely one thinks one lives — out of reach of temptation, sin, folly. And then suddenly — Oh! Life is terrible. It rules us, we do not rule it.

[*Enter* ROSALIE *R.*]

ROSALIE. Did your ladyship ring for me?

LADY WINDERMERE. Yes. Have you found out at what time Lord Windermere came in last night?

ROSALIE. His lordship did not come in till five o'clock.

LADY WINDERMERE. Five o'clock! He knocked at my door this morning, didn't he?

ROSALIE. Yes, my lady — at half past nine. I told him your ladyship was not awake yet.

LADY WINDERMERE. Did he say anything?

ROSALIE. Something about your ladyship's fan. I didn't quite catch what his lordship said. Has the fan been lost, my lady? I can't find it, and Parker says it was not left in any of the rooms. He has looked in all of them and on the terrace as well.

LADY WINDERMERE. It doesn't matter. Tell Parker not to trouble. That will do.

[*Exit* ROSALIE.]

LADY WINDERMERE. [*Rising*] She is sure to tell him. I can fancy a person doing a wonderful act of self-sacrifice, doing it spontaneously, recklessly, nobly — and afterwards finding out that it costs too much. Why should she hesitate between her ruin and mine? . . . How strange! I would have publicly disgraced her in my own house. She accepts public disgrace in the house of another to save me. . . . There is a bitter irony in things, a bitter irony in the way we talk of good and bad women. . . . Oh, what a lesson! and what a pity that in life we only get our lessons when they are of no use to us! For even if she doesn't tell, I must. Oh! the shame of it, the shame of it! To tell it is to live through it all again. Actions are the first tragedy in life, words

are the second. Words are perhaps the worst. Words are merciless. . . . Oh! [*Starts as* Lord Windermere *enters.*]

Lord Windermere. [*Kisses her.*] Margaret — how pale you look!

Lady Windermere. I slept very badly.

Lord Windermere. [*Sitting on sofa with her*] I am so sorry. I came in dreadfully late, and didn't like to wake you. You are crying, dear.

Lady Windermere. Yes, I am crying, for I have something to tell you, Arthur.

Lord Windermere. My dear child, you are not well. You've been doing too much. Let us go away to the country. You'll be all right at Selby. The season is almost over. There is no use staying on. Poor darling! We'll go away to-day, if you like. [*Rises.*] We can easily catch the 4.30. I'll send a wire to Fannen. [*Crosses and sits down at table to write a telegram.*]

Lady Windermere. Yes, let us go away to-day. No, I can't go to-day, Arthur. There is someone I must see before I leave town — someone who has been kind to me.

Lord Windermere. [*Rising and leaning over sofa*] Kind to you?

Lady Windermere. Far more than that. [*Rises and goes to him.*] I will tell you, Arthur, but only love me, love me as you used to love me.

Lord Windermere. Used to? You are not thinking of that wretched woman who came here last night? [*Coming round and sitting R. of her*] You don't still imagine — no, you couldn't.

Lady Windermere. I don't. I know now I was wrong and foolish.

Lord Windermere. It was very good of you to receive her last night — but you are never to see her again.

Lady Windermere. Why do you say that? [*A pause*]

Lord Windermere. [*Holding her hand*] Margaret, I thought Mrs. Erlynne was a woman more sinned against than sinning, as the phrase goes. I thought she wanted to be good, to get back

into a place that she had lost by a moment's folly, to lead again a decent life. I believed what she told me — I was mistaken in her. She is bad — as bad as a woman can be.

LADY WINDERMERE. Arthur, Arthur, don't talk so bitterly about any woman. I don't think now that people can be divided into the good and the bad, as though they were two separate races or creations. What are called good women may have terrible things in them, mad moods of recklessness, assertion, jealousy, sin. Bad women, as they are termed, may have in them sorrow, repentance, pity, sacrifice. And I don't think Mrs. Erlynne a bad woman — I know she's not.

LORD WINDERMERE. My dear child, the woman's impossible. No matter what harm she tries to do us, you must never see her again. She is inadmissible anywhere.

LADY WINDERMERE. But I want to see her. I want her to come here.

LORD WINDERMERE. Never!

LADY WINDERMERE. She came here once as *your* guest. She must come now as *mine*. That is but fair.

LORD WINDERMERE. She should never have come here.

LADY WINDERMERE. [*Rising*] It is too late, Arthur, to say that now. [*Moves away.*]

LORD WINDERMERE. [*Rising*] Margaret, if you knew where Mrs. Erlynne went last night after she left this house, you would not sit in the same room with her. It was absolutely shameless, the whole thing.

LADY WINDERMERE. Arthur, I can't bear it any longer. I must tell you. Last night —

[*Enter* PARKER *with a tray on which lie* LADY WINDERMERE'S *fan and a card.*]

PARKER. Mrs. Erlynne has called to return your ladyship's fan which she took away by mistake last night. Mrs. Erlynne has written a message on the card.

LADY WINDERMERE. Oh, ask Mrs. Erlynne to be kind enough to come up. [*Reads card.*] Say I shall be very glad to see her.

[*Exit* PARKER.]

She wants to see me, Arthur.

LORD WINDERMERE. [*Takes card and looks at it.*] Margaret, I *beg* you not to. Let me see her first, at any rate. She's a very dangerous woman. She is the most dangerous woman I know. You don't realize what you're doing.

LADY WINDERMERE. It is right that I should see her.

LORD WINDERMERE. My child, you may be on the brink of a great sorrow. Don't go to meet it. It is absolutely necessary that I should see her before you do.

LADY WINDERMERE. Why should it be necessary?

[*Enter* PARKER.]

PARKER. Mrs. Erlynne.

[*Enter* MRS. ERLYNNE. *Exit* PARKER.]

MRS. ERLYNNE. How do you do, Lady Windermere? [*To* LORD WINDERMERE] How do you do? Do you know, Lady Windermere, I am so sorry about your fan. I can't imagine how I made such a silly mistake. Most stupid of me. And as I was driving in your direction, I thought I would take the opportunity of returning your property in person, with many apologies for my carelessness, and of bidding you good-by.

LADY WINDERMERE. Good-by? [*Moves toward sofa with* MRS. ERLYNNE *and sits down beside her.*] Are you going away, then, Mrs. Erlynne?

MRS. ERLYNNE. Yes; I am going to live abroad again. The English climate doesn't suit me. My — heart is affected here, and that I don't like. I prefer living in the south. London is too full of fogs and — and serious people, Lord Windermere. Whether the fogs produce the serious people or whether the serious people produce the fogs, I don't know, but the whole

thing rather gets on my nerves, and so I'm leaving this afternoon by the Club Train.

LADY WINDERMERE. This afternoon? But I wanted so much to come and see you.

MRS. ERLYNNE. How kind of you! But I am afraid I have to go.

LADY WINDERMERE. Shall I never see you again, Mrs. Erlynne?

MRS. ERLYNNE. I am afraid not. Our lives lie too far apart. But there is a little thing I would like you to do for me. I want a photograph of you, Lady Windermere — would you give me one? You don't know how gratified I should be.

LADY WINDERMERE. Oh, with pleasure. There is one on that table. I'll show it to you. [*Goes across to the table.*]

LORD WINDERMERE. [*Coming up to* MRS. ERLYNNE *and speaking in a low voice*] It is monstrous your intruding yourself here after your conduct last night.

MRS. ERLYNNE. [*With an amused smile*] My dear Windermere, manners before morals!

LADY WINDERMERE. [*Returning*] I'm afraid it is very flattering — I am not so pretty as that. [*Showing photograph*]

MRS. ERLYNNE. You are much prettier. But haven't you got one of yourself with your little boy?

LADY WINDERMERE. I have. Would you prefer one of those?

MRS. ERLYNNE. Yes.

LADY WINDERMERE. I'll go and get it for you, if you'll excuse me for a moment. I have one upstairs.

MRS. ERLYNNE. So sorry, Lady Windermere, to give you so much trouble.

LADY WINDERMERE. [*Moves to door R.*] No trouble at all, Mrs. Erlynne.

MRS. ERLYNNE. Thanks so much.

[*Exit* LADY WINDERMERE *R.*]

You seem rather out of temper this morning, Windermere. Why should you be? Margaret and I get on charmingly together.

LORD WINDERMERE. I can't bear to see you with her. Besides, you have not told me the truth, Mrs. Erlynne.

MRS. ERLYNNE. I have not told *her* the truth, you mean.

LORD WINDERMERE. [*Standing C.*] I sometimes wish you had. I should have been spared then the misery, the anxiety, the annoyance of the last six months. But rather than my wife should know — that the mother whom she was taught to consider as dead, the mother whom she has mourned as dead, is living — a divorced woman going about under an assumed name, a bad woman preying upon life, as I know you now to be — rather than that, I was ready to supply you with money to pay bill after bill, extravagance after extravagance, to risk what occurred yesterday, the first quarrel I have ever had with my wife. You don't understand what that means to me. How could you? But I tell you that the only bitter words that ever came from those sweet lips of hers were on your account, and I hate to see you next her. You sully the innocence that is in her. [*Moves L. C.*] And then I used to think that with all your faults you were frank and honest. You are not.

MRS. ERLYNNE. Why do you say that?

LORD WINDERMERE. You made me get you an invitation to my wife's ball.

MRS. ERLYNNE. For my daughter's ball — yes.

LORD WINDERMERE. You came, and within an hour of your leaving the house, you are found in a man's rooms — you are disgraced before everyone. [*Goes up stage C.*]

MRS. ERLYNNE. Yes.

LORD WINDERMERE. [*Turning round on her*] Therefore I have a right to look upon you as what you are — a worthless, vicious woman. I have the right to tell you never to enter this house, never to attempt to come near my wife —

MRS. ERLYNNE. [*Coldly*] My daughter, you mean.

LORD WINDERMERE. You have no right to claim her as your daughter. You left her, abandoned her, when she was but a

child in the cradle, abandoned her for your lover, who abandoned you in turn.

MRS. ERLYNNE. [*Rising*] Do you count that to his credit, Lord Windermere — or to mine?

LORD WINDERMERE. To his, now that I know you.

MRS. ERLYNNE. Take care — you had better be careful.

LORD WINDERMERE. Oh, I am not going to mince words for you. I know you thoroughly.

MRS. ERLYNNE. [*Looking steadily at him*] I question that.

LORD WINDERMERE. I *do* know you. For twenty years of your life you lived without your child, without a thought of your child. One day you read in the papers that she had married a rich man. You saw your hideous chance. You knew that to spare her the ignominy of learning that a woman like you was her mother, I would endure anything. You began your blackmailing.

MRS. ERLYNNE. [*Shrugging her shoulders*] Don't use ugly words, Windermere. They are vulgar. I saw my chance, it is true, and took it.

LORD WINDERMERE. Yes, you took it — and spoiled it all last night by being found out.

MRS. ERLYNNE. [*With a strange smile*] You are quite right, I spoiled it all last night.

LORD WINDERMERE. And as for your blunder in taking my wife's fan from here, and then leaving it about in Darlington's rooms, it is unpardonable. I can't bear the sight of it now. I shall never let my wife use it again. The thing is soiled for me. You should have kept it, and not brought it back.

MRS. ERLYNNE. I think I *shall* keep it. [*Goes up.*] It's extremely pretty. [*Takes up fan.*] I shall ask Margaret to give it to me.

LORD WINDERMERE. I hope my wife will give it you.

MRS. ERLYNNE. Oh, I'm sure she will have no objection.

LORD WINDERMERE. I wish that at the same time she would give you a miniature she kisses every night before she prays —

it's the miniature of a young, innocent-looking girl with beautiful dark hair.

MRS. ERLYNNE. Ah, yes, I remember. How long ago that seems! [*Goes to sofa and sits down.*] It was done before I was married. Dark hair and an innocent expression were the fashion then, Windermere! [*A pause*]

LORD WINDERMERE. What do you mean by coming here this morning? What is your object? [*Crossing L. C. and sitting*]

MRS. ERLYNNE. [*With a note of irony in her voice*] To bid good-by to my dear daughter, of course. [LORD WINDERMERE *bites his underlip in anger.* MRS. ERLYNNE *looks at him, and her voice and manner become serious. In her accents as she talks there is a note of deep tragedy. For a moment she reveals herself.*] Oh, don't imagine I am going to have a pathetic scene with her, weep on her neck and tell her who I am, and all that kind of thing. I have no ambition to play the part of a mother. Only once in my life have I known a mother's feelings. That was last night. They were terrible — they made me suffer — they made me suffer too much. For twenty years, as you say, I have lived childless — I want to live childless still. [*Hiding her feelings with a trivial laugh*] Besides, my dear Windermere, how on earth could I pose as a mother with a grown-up daughter? Margaret is twenty-one, and I have never admitted that I am more than twenty-nine, or thirty at the most. Twenty-nine when there are pink shades, thirty when there are not. So you see what difficulties it would involve. No, as far as I am concerned, let your wife cherish the memory of this dead, stainless mother. Why should I interfere with her illusions? I find it hard enough to keep my own. I lost one illusion last night. I thought I had no heart. I find I have, and a heart doesn't suit me, Windermere. Somehow it doesn't go with modern dress. It makes one look old. [*Takes up hand mirror from table and looks into it.*] And it spoils one's career at critical moments.

LORD WINDERMERE. You fill me with horror — with absolute horror.

MRS. ERLYNNE. [*Rising*] I suppose, Windermere, you would like me to retire into a convent or become a hospital nurse or something of that kind, as people do in silly modern novels. That is stupid of you, Arthur; in real life we don't do such things — not as long as we have any good looks left, at any rate. No — what consoles one nowadays is not repentance, but pleasure. Repentance is quite out of date. And besides, if a woman really repents, she has to go to a bad dressmaker, otherwise no one believes in her. And nothing in the world would induce me to do that. No; I am going to pass entirely out of your two lives. My coming into them has been a mistake — I discovered that last night.

LORD WINDERMERE. A fatal mistake.

MRS. ERLYNNE. [*Smiling*] Almost fatal.

LORD WINDERMERE. I am sorry now I did not tell my wife the whole thing at once.

MRS. ERLYNNE. I regret my bad actions. You regret your good ones — that is the difference between us.

LORD WINDERMERE. I don't trust you. I *will* tell my wife. It's better for her to know, and from me. It will cause her infinite pain — it will humiliate her terribly, but it's right that she should know.

MRS. ERLYNNE. You propose to tell her?

LORD WINDERMERE. I am going to tell her.

MRS. ERLYNNE. [*Going up to him*] If you do, I will make my name so infamous that it will mar every moment of her life. It will ruin her and make her wretched. If you dare to tell her, there is no depth of degradation I will not sink to, no pit of shame I will not enter. You shall not tell her — I forbid you.

LORD WINDERMERE. Why?

MRS. ERLYNNE. [*After a pause*] If I said to you that I cared for her, perhaps loved her even — you would sneer at me, wouldn't you?

LORD WINDERMERE. I should feel it was not true. A mother's love means devotion, unselfishness, sacrifice. What could you know of such things?

MRS. ERLYNNE. You are right. What could I know of such things? Don't let us talk any more about it; as for telling my daughter who I am, that I do not allow. It is my secret, it is not yours. If I make up my mind to tell her, and I think I will, I shall tell her before I leave this house — if not, I shall never tell her.

LORD WINDERMERE. [*Angrily*] Then let me beg of you to leave our house at once. I will make your excuses to Margaret.

[*Enter* LADY WINDERMERE *R. She goes over to* MRS. ERLYNNE *with the photograph in her hand.* LORD WINDERMERE *moves to back of sofa, and anxiously watches* MRS. ERLYNNE *as the scene progresses.*]

LADY WINDERMERE. I am so sorry, Mrs. Erlynne, to have kept you waiting. I couldn't find the photograph anywhere. At last I discovered it in my husband's dressing-room — he had stolen it.

MRS. ERLYNNE. [*Takes photograph from her and looks at it.*] I am not surprised — it is charming. [*Goes over to sofa with* LADY WINDERMERE *and sits down beside her. Looks again at the photograph.*] And so that is your little boy! What is he called?

LADY WINDERMERE. Gerald, after my dear father.

MRS. ERLYNNE. [*Laying the photograph down*] Really?

LADY WINDERMERE. Yes. If it had been a girl, I would have called it after my mother. My mother had the same name as myself, Margaret.

MRS. ERLYNNE. My name is Margaret, too.

LADY WINDERMERE. Indeed!

MRS. ERLYNNE. Yes. [*Pause*] You are devoted to your mother's memory, Lady Windermere, your husband tells me.

LADY WINDERMERE. We all have ideals in life. At least we all should have. Mine is my mother.

MRS. ERLYNNE. Ideals are dangerous things. Realities are better. They wound, but they are better.

LADY WINDERMERE. [*Shaking her head*] If I lost my ideals, I should lose everything.

MRS. ERLYNNE. Everything?

LADY WINDERMERE. Yes. [*Pause*]

MRS. ERLYNNE. Did your father often speak to you of your mother?

LADY WINDERMERE. No, it gave him too much pain. He told me how my mother had died a few months after I was born. His eyes filled with tears as he spoke. Then he begged me never to mention her name to him again. It made him suffer even to hear it. My father — my father really died of a broken heart. His was the most ruined life I know.

MRS. ERLYNNE. [*Rising*] I am afraid I must go now, Lady Windermere.

LADY WINDERMERE. [*Rising*] Oh, no, don't.

MRS. ERLYNNE. I think I had better. My carriage must have come back by this time. I sent it to Lady Jedburgh's with a note.

LADY WINDERMERE. Arthur, would you mind seeing if Mrs. Erlynne's carriage has come back?

MRS. ERLYNNE. Pray don't trouble Lord Windermere, Lady Windermere.

LADY WINDERMERE. Yes, Arthur, do go, please.

[LORD WINDERMERE *hesitates for a moment and looks at* MRS. ERLYNNE. *She remains quite impassive. He leaves the room.*]

[*To* MRS. ERLYNNE] Oh! What am I to say to you? You saved me last night! [*Goes toward her.*]

MRS. ERLYNNE. Hush — don't speak of it.

LADY WINDERMERE. I must speak of it. I can't let you think I am going to accept this sacrifice. I am not. It is too great. I am going to tell my husband everything. It is my duty.

MRS. ERLYNNE. It is not your duty — at least you have duties to others besides him. You say you owe me something?

LADY WINDERMERE. I owe you everything.

MRS. ERLYNNE. Then pay your debt by silence. That is the only way in which it can be paid. Don't spoil the one good thing I have done in my life by telling it to anyone. Promise me that what passed last night will remain a secret between us. You must not bring misery into your husband's life. Why spoil his love? You must not spoil it. Love is easily killed. Oh, how easily love is killed! Pledge me your word, Lady Windermere, that you will *never* tell him. I insist upon it.

LADY WINDERMERE. [*With bowed head*] It is your will, not mine.

MRS. ERLYNNE. Yes, it is my will. And never forget your child — I like to think of you as a mother. I like you to think of yourself as one.

LADY WINDERMERE. [*Looking up*] I always will now. Only once in my life I have forgotten my own mother — that was last night. Oh, if I had remembered her, I should not have been so foolish, so wicked!

MRS. ERLYNNE. [*With a slight shudder*] Hush, last night is quite over.

[*Enter* LORD WINDERMERE.]

LORD WINDERMERE. Your carriage has not come back yet, Mrs. Erlynne.

MRS. ERLYNNE. It makes no matter. I'll take a hansom. There is nothing in the world so respectable as a good Shrewsbury and Talbot. And now, dear Lady Windermere, I am afraid it is really good-by. [*Moves up C.*] Oh, I remember. You'll think me absurd, but do you know, I've taken a great fancy to this fan that I was silly enough to run away with last night from your ball. Now I wonder would you give it to me? Lord Windermere says you may. I know it is his present.

LADY WINDERMERE. Oh, certainly, if it will give you any pleasure. But it has my name on it. It has "Margaret" on it.

MRS. ERLYNNE. But we have the same Christian name.

LADY WINDERMERE. Oh, I forgot. Of course, do have it. What a wonderful chance our names being the same!

MRS. ERLYNNE. Quite wonderful. Thanks — it will always remind me of you. [*Shakes hands with her.*]

[*Enter* PARKER.]

PARKER. Lord Augustus Lorton. Mrs. Erlynne's carriage has come.

[*Enter* LORD AUGUSTUS.]

LORD AUGUSTUS. Good morning, dear boy. Good morning, Lady Windermere. [*Sees* MRS. ERLYNNE.] Mrs. Erlynne!

MRS. ERLYNNE. How do you do, Lord Augustus? Are you quite well this morning?

LORD AUGUSTUS. [*Coldly*] Quite well, thank you, Mrs. Erlynne.

MRS. ERLYNNE. You don't look at all well, Lord Augustus. You stop up too late — it is so bad for you. You really should take care of yourself. Good-by, Lord Windermere. [*Goes toward door with a bow to* LORD AUGUSTUS. *Suddenly smiles, and looks back at him.*] Lord Augustus! Won't you see me to my carriage? You might carry the fan.

LORD WINDERMERE. Allow me!

MRS. ERLYNNE. No, I want Lord Augustus. I have a special message for the dear Duchess. Won't you carry the fan, Lord Augustus?

LORD AUGUSTUS. If you really desire it, Mrs. Erlynne.

MRS. ERLYNNE. [*Laughing*] Of course I do. You'll carry it so gracefully. You would carry off anything gracefully, dear Lord Augustus.

[*When she reaches the door she looks back for a moment at* LADY WINDERMERE. *Their eyes meet. Then she turns, and exit C., followed by* LORD AUGUSTUS.]

LADY WINDERMERE. You will never speak against Mrs. Erlynne again, Arthur, will you?

LORD WINDERMERE. [*Gravely*] She is better than one thought her.

LADY WINDERMERE. She is better than I am.

LORD WINDERMERE. [*Smiling as he strokes her hair*] Child, you and she belong to different worlds. Into your world evil has never entered.

LADY WINDERMERE. Don't say that, Arthur. There is the same world for all of us, and good and evil, sin and innocence, go through it hand in hand. To shut one's eyes to half of life that one may live securely is as though one blinded oneself that one might walk with more safety in a land of pit and precipice.

LORD WINDERMERE. [*Moves down with her.*] Darling, why do you say that?

LADY WINDERMERE. [*Sits on sofa.*] Because I, who had shut my eyes to life, came to the brink. And one who had separated us —

LORD WINDERMERE. We were never parted.

LADY WINDERMERE. We never must be again. Oh, Arthur, don't love me less, and I will trust you more. I will trust you absolutely. Let us go to Selby. In the Rose Garden at Selby the roses are white and red.

[*Enter* LORD AUGUSTUS *C.*]

LORD AUGUSTUS. Arthur, she has explained everything! [LADY WINDERMERE *looks horribly frightened.* LORD WINDERMERE *starts.* LORD AUGUSTUS *takes* LORD WINDERMERE *by the arm, and brings him to front of stage.*] My dear fellow, she has explained every demmed thing. We all wronged her immensely. It was entirely for my sake she went to Darlington's rooms — called first at the club. Fact is, wanted to put me out of suspense, and being told I had gone on, followed — naturally — frightened when she heard a lot of men coming in — retired to

another room — I assure you, most gratifying to me, the whole thing. We all behaved brutally to her. She is just the woman for me. Suits me down to the ground. All the condition she makes is that we live out of England — a very good thing, too! — Demmed clubs, demmed climate, demmed cooks, demmed everything! Sick of it all.

LADY WINDERMERE. [*Frightened*] Has Mrs. Erlynne —

LORD AUGUSTUS. [*Advancing toward her with a bow*] Yes, Lady Windermere, Mrs. Erlynne has done me the honor of accepting my hand.

LORD WINDERMERE. Well, you are certainly marrying a very clever woman.

LADY WINDERMERE. [*Taking her husband's hand*] Ah! you're marrying a very good woman.

CURTAIN

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The Morality

Everyman

Early edition of Skot reprinted by W. W. Greg, Stechert, 1904; good popular modern editions in Everyman's Library (Vol. 381), Dutton, and in the Riverside Literature Series (No. 191), Houghton Mifflin. The best study of the moralities is W. R. Mackenzie's "The English Moralities," Harvard University Press, 1914. See also G. Crosse, "The Religious Drama," Morehouse, London, 1913.

Suggested Reading List

Few of the moralities have been reprinted in modernized texts. They are probably most accessible in J. M. Manly's "Specimens of the Pre-Shakespearean Drama" (2 vols.), Ginn, 1897, and in J. Q. Adams's "Chief Pre-Shakespearean Dramas," Houghton Mifflin, 1924. John Redford's "Wyt and Science" is a good example of the morality on learning. The Shakespeare Society, London, 1848.

Many interesting miracle plays have been reprinted in modernized texts. Two of the best are the Townley "Second Shepherd's Play" and the Brome play "Abraham and Isaac" (in C. G. Child's "The Second Shepherd's Play, etc.," Riverside Literature Series (No. 191), Houghton Mifflin, and in other collections).

The modern revival of religious plays is represented by "Religious Dramas" (2 vols., Century, 1924, 1926), selected by the Committee on Drama of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America.

Tragedy

The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus

Good critical edition in W. A. Neilson's "The Chief Elizabethan Dramatists," Houghton Mifflin, 1911; popular editions in Everyman's

Library, Dutton; The Mermaid Series, Scribner, and elsewhere. See also J. L. Hotson's book, "The Death of Christopher Marlowe," Harvard University Press, 1925; and S. A. Tannenbaum, "The Assassination of Christopher Marlowe: A New View," privately printed (The Tenny Press), New York, 1928.

All for Love

Good critical editions in the Scott-Saintsbury edition of Dryden's "Works" (18 vols.), Constable, Edinburgh, 1882–1893; and in G. R. Noyes's "Selected Dramas of John Dryden," Scott, Foresman, 1909. See also G. Saintsbury's "Dryden" (English Men of Letters Series), Harper, 1881; and A. Nicoll's "Dryden as an Adapter of Shakespeare" (Shakespeare Association Pamphlets, No. 8), Oxford University Press, 1922; and also his "Dryden and his Poetry," Harrap, London, 1923. For a modern play based on a kindred story, read George Bernard Shaw's "Cæsar and Cleopatra," Brentano, 1913.

Suggested Reading List

General works on tragedy: W. M. Dixon, "Tragedy," Longmans, 1924; A. H. Thorndike, "Tragedy," Houghton Mifflin, 1908.

Suggested tragedies for collateral reading: The term "tragedy" is little used in contemporary drama except for consciously literary performances in verse, such as H. A. Jones's "The Tempter" or Stephen Phillips's "Herod," "Paolo and Francesca," and others. A play of serious or tragic character is usually called a play, or a drama, or the like. This is partly due to popular taste, which rejects tragedy on the modern stage; and it is partly due to the preference which playwrights have for individual experiences and their unwillingness to grapple with universal laws. The following plays may be fairly classified as tragedies, and they illustrate the main characteristics of the type in English drama:

William Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth, Antony and Cleopatra.
Thomas Otway, Venice Preserved.
Joseph Addison, Cato.
Nicholas Rowe, The Tragedy of Jane Shore.
John Synge, Riders to the Sea.
John Masefield, The Tragedy of Nan.
John Galsworthy, Justice.
St. John Ervine, John Ferguson.
Eugene O'Neill, The Emperor Jones.
George Bernard Shaw, Saint Joan.

Comedy

She Stoops to Conquer

Good editions in D. H. Stevens's "Types of English Drama, 1660–1780," Ginn, 1923; and in the Belles Lettres Series, Heath; the Temple Dramatists, Dutton, and elsewhere. There is as yet no very satisfactory life of Goldsmith; in many ways the best is still that of J. Prior (2 vols.), Murray, London, 1837. A. Dobson's "Memoir," Scribner, 1899, is recommended; and Washington Irving's "Oliver Goldsmith," Putnam, 1849, is very readable.

The School for Scandal

Good editions in "The Dramatic Works" of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Oxford Edition, Oxford University Press, 1906; in D. H. Stevens's "Types of English Drama, 1660–1780," Ginn, 1923, and elsewhere. The accepted text of the play for more than a century has been that of Thomas Moore's edition, Bickers and Son, London, 1823. The text given by W. F. Rae (1902) is distinctly inferior. A new critical edition by R. Crompton Rhodes ("The Works of Sheridan" (3 vols.), Blackwell, London, 1928) will perhaps be generally accepted as standard, although there seems no possibility of absolute finality because of the frequent changes which Sheridan made in the play and his unwillingness to have it printed during his lifetime. The best biography of Sheridan is that of Walter Sichel, Houghton Mifflin, 1909.

Suggested Reading List

William Shakespeare, Much Ado about Nothing, As You Like It, Twelfth Night.
Thomas Dekker, The Shoemakers' Holiday.
Ben Jonson, The Alchemist.
William Congreve, The Way of the World.
Oliver Goldsmith, The Good-Natur'd Man.
Richard B. Sheridan, The Rivals, The Critic.
Oscar Wilde, The Importance of Being Earnest.
H. A. Jones, The Masqueraders, The Liars.
George Bernard Shaw, Candida, The Devil's Disciple, You Never Can Tell, Cæsar and Cleopatra.
Sir J. M. Barrie, The Admirable Crichton, Peter Pan, Alice Sit-by-the-Fire, What Every Woman Knows, A Kiss for Cinderella, Dear Brutus.

The Problem Play

Lady Windermere's Fan

Good edition in "The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde" (12 vols.) (Patrons' Edition de Luxe), Doubleday, Doran, 1923. A good biography

is that by Frank Harris, "Oscar Wilde: His Life and Confessions" (2 vols.), Brentano, 1918.

Suggested Reading List

The student is referred to the entire section which deals with Contemporary Drama and Theater. A brief list of suggested readings is given below:

Oscar Wilde, A Woman of No Importance, An Ideal Husband.

Sir A. W. Pinero. The Second Mrs. Tanqueray, The Benefit of the Doubt.

H. A. Jones, Michael and his Lost Angel, The Hypocrites.

George Bernard Shaw, Man and Superman, Major Barbara, The Doctor's Dilemma, Pygmalion.

John Galsworthy, Strife.

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